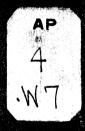


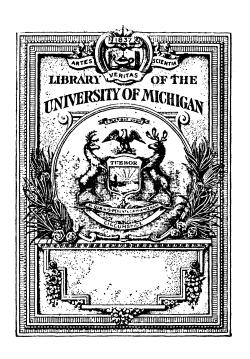
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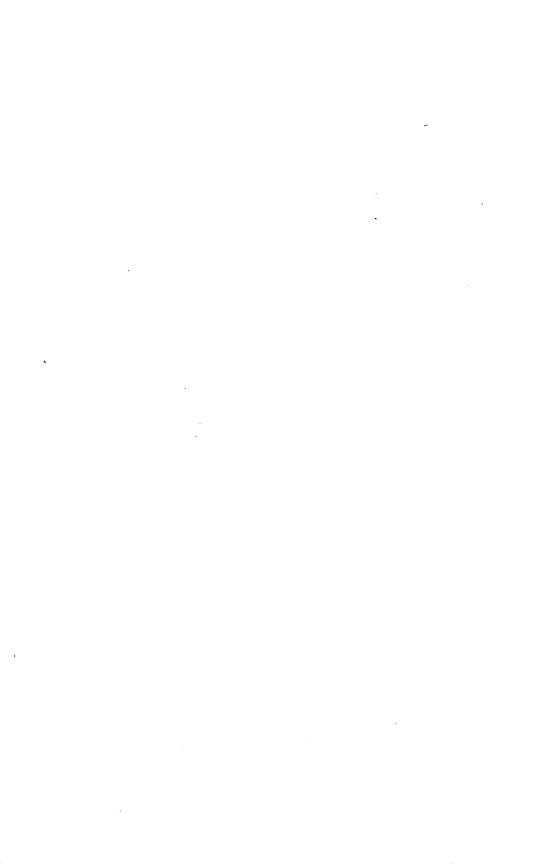


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FOR MEN AND WOMEN

VOL. LIV

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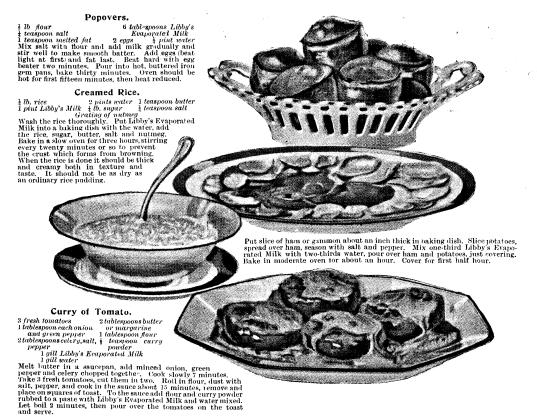
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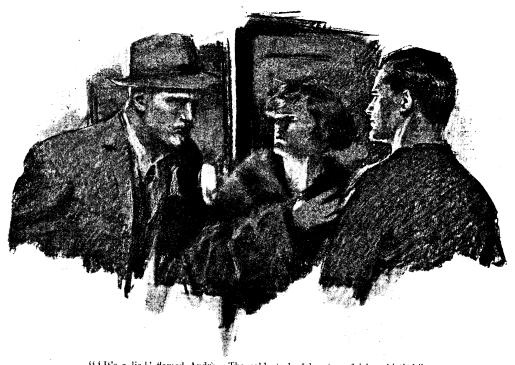
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A VENETIAN CANAL ESPECIALLY CONSTRUCTED IN A PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT STUDIO FOR A SCENE FROM "A SOCIETY EXILE": GEORGE FITZMAURICE STANDING IN THE WATER TO GIVE DIRECTIONS TO THE PLAYERS. See article "The Ingenuity of the Cinema Producer," on page 49 of this number.



"'It's a lie!' flamed Andre. The cold steel of her tone fairly whistled."

GRAMARYE

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "The Brother of Daphne," "The Courts of Idleness," "Berry and Co."

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

AJOR ANTHONY LYVEDEN,
D.S.O., was healthily tired. So
much so, in fact, that he was
sorely tempted to retire to bed without
more ado. On reflecting, however, that at
least twenty minutes must elapse before his
faithful digestion could also rest from its
labours, he lighted a pipe slowly and then
—afraid to sit down, lest he should fall
asleep—leaned his tired back against a side
of the enormous fireplace and folded his
arms.

It is probable that the chamber which his eyes surveyed was more than four hundred years old. That it was at once his hall, kitchen, and parlour, is undeniable. One small stout wall contained the front door

and the window, a third part of which could be induced to open, but was to-night fast shut. Another hoisted the breakneck staircase which led to the room above. A third stood blank, while the fourth was just wide enough to frame the tremendous fire-place, which, with its two chimney-corners, made up a bay nearly one-half the size of the little room it served. The ceiling, itself none too high, was heavy with punishing beams, so that a tall man must pick and choose his station if he would stand upright; and the floor was of soft red brick, a little sunken in places, but, on the whole, well and truly laid.

A cupboard under the stairs served as a larder and store-room; a flap beneath the

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window made a firm table; in spite of their age, a Windsor and a basket chair, when called upon, satisfactorily discharged the duties for which they were contrived. A battered foot-bath did more. In a word, it received platters and knives and forks which needed cleansing, and in due season delivered them cleansed; of a Sunday morning it became a terrier's tub; upon one afternoon in the week a vessel in which clothes were washed.

Since this was all the furniture, the place looked bare. As a living-room it left much to be desired; but, since Major Anthony Lyveden did not live in it, that did not trouble him. He used the room, certainly he was using it now; nightly he slept above it—but he lived in the open air.

This was patent from the look of him. Wind, rain, and sun set upon their favourites a mark which there is no mistaking. Under the treatment of these three bluff specialists the handsome face had in a short month become a picture. In all his life the ex-officer had never looked so well. He had been fit enough in the field; but there responsibility, the lack of sleep, the constant strain upon the nerves, had kicked aside the props as fast as good fresh air had set them up. Thereafter nine months of unemployment and another five as a footman had done him no good. Indeed, he had come to the Cotswolds rather the worse for The life, however, which he was leading now gave specialists and patient a chance.

It was when he had given his late master notice and had twenty-one pounds in the world that Major Lyveden had seen the advertisement-

A solitary existence, hard work, long hours, £3 a week, fuel, a bachelor's unfurnished lodging, and an open-air life is offered to an ex-officer; the job has been considered and abusively rejected by five ex-other ranks on the score that it is "not good enough"; as an ex-officer myself, I disagree with them; incidentally, I can pay no more; sorry to have to add that applicants must be physically fit. Write, Box 1078, c/o "The Times," E.C. 4.

Immediately he had applied by telegram,

paying for a reply. ...

Three days later he and his terrier Patch had emerged from the London train into the keen night air of Chipping Norton.

There on the platform to meet him had stood his new employer—a tremendous figure of a man, with the eyes of an explorer and the physique of an Atlas, and, after a little delay, Lyveden had found himself seated in a high dog-cart, which, in the wake of an impatient roan, was bowling along over the cold white roads, listening to the steady deep voice foretelling his fate.

"We're going to Girdle. I've taken a room at the inn there for you to-night. Your cottage is two miles from there. I'll show you the way and meet you there in the morning—at half-past eight, please. It's water-tight—I had the thatch tended this year—and it's got its own well—good water. It's in the park, by the side of the London road, so you won't be too lonely. Now, your work. Woodman, road-maker, joiner, keeper, forester, gardener—that's what I want." Anthony's brain reeled. "That's what I am myself. Listen. I've inherited this estate, which has been let go for over a hundred years. There isn't a foot of fencing that isn't rotten, a road that you can walk on, a bridge that is safe. The woods—it's all woodland—have gone to blazes. I want to pull it round. . . . Fifty R.E.'s and a Labour Battalion is what it wants, but that's a dream. I've tried the obvious way. I asked for tenders for mending a twelve-foot bridge. The lowest was seventy pounds. I did it myself, single-handed, in seven days. . . I've saved my stamps since then. Well, I've got a small Anthony heaved a sigh of relief. "Two old carters, two carpenters, three magnificent sailors—all deaf, poor chaps and a little lame engineer. But I haven't an understudy. . . . I hope you'll like it, and stay. It's a man's life."

"I like the sound of it," said Lyveden.

"What are you on now?"

"Road-making at the moment. fence is the most important, but the roads are so bad we can't get the timber through. It's all sawn ready—we've got a toy sawmill—but we can't carry it. You see . . . "

The speaker's enthusiasm had been infectious. Lyveden had found himself violently interested in his new life before

he had entered upon it.

The next day he had accepted the tiny cabin as his future home, and had had a fire roaring upon the hearth before nine Colonel Winchester, who had expected to lodge him at Girdle for the best part of a week, had abetted his determination to take immediate possession with a grateful heart, presenting his new tenant with some blankets and an excellent campbed, and putting a waggon at his disposal for the rest of the day. Seven o'clock that

evening had found Major Lyveden and his dog fairly installed in their new quarters.

And now a month had gone by—to be exact, some thirty-four days, the biggest ones, perhaps, in all Lyveden's life. In that short space of time the man whose faith had frozen had become a zealot.

Five thousand acres of woodland and the fine frenzy of an Homeric Quixote had wrought the miracle. Of course the soil was good, and had been ruthlessly harrowed and ploughed into the very pink of condition to receive such seed. For months Lyveden's enterprise had been stifled: for months Necessity had kept his intellect chained to a pantry-sink: such ambition as he had had was famished. To crown it all, Love had lugged him into the porch of Paradise, to slam the gates in his face . . . Mind and body alike were craving for some immense distraction. In return for board and lodging for his terrier and himself, the man would have picked oakum-furiously: but not in Hampshire. That was the county of Paradise—Paradise Lost.

As we have seen, the bare idea of the employment had found favour in Lyveden's eyes, and, before they had been together for half an hour, the personality of Winchester had taken him by the arm. When, two days later, master and man strode through the splendid havor of the woods, where the dead lay where they had fallen, and the quick were wrestling for life, where the bastard was bullying the true-born, and kings were mobbed by an unruly rabble—dogs with their paws upon the table, eating the children's bread-where avenues and glades were choked with thickets, where clearings had become brakes, and vistas and prospects were screened by aged upstarts that knew no law; when they followed the broken roads, where fallen banks sprawled on the fairway, and the laborious rain had worn ruts into straggling ditches, where culverts had given way and the dammed streams had spread the track with wasting pools, where sometimes time-honoured weeds blotted the very memory of the trail into oblivion; when they stood before an old grey mansion, with what had once been lawns about it and the ruin of a great cedar hard by its side, its many windows surveying with a grave stare the wreck and riot of the court it kept—then for the first time Anthony Lyveden heard the sound of the trumpets.

The physical attraction, no doubt, of the work to be done was crooking a beckening

finger. To pass his time among these glorious woods, to have a healthy occupation which would never be gone, to enjoy and provide for his dog a peaceful possession of the necessities of life, was an alluring prospect.

Yet this was not the call the trumpets

had wound.

That distant silvery flourish was not of the flesh. It was the same fanfare that has sent men to lessen the mysteries of the unknown world, travel the trackless earth, sail on uncharted seas, trudge on eternal snows, to sweat and shiver under strange heavens, grapple with Nature upon the Dame's own ground and try a fall with the Amazon—with none to see fair play—for the tale of her secrets.

Anthony's imagination pricked up its flattened ears....

Gazing upon the crookedness about him, he saw it straightened: looking upon the rough places, he saw them made plain. He saw the desolation banished, the wilderness made glad. He saw the woods ordered, the broken roads mended, the bridges rebuilt, streams back in their beds, vistas unshuttered, avenues cleared . . . He saw himself striving, one of a little company sworn to redeem the stolen property. Man had won it by the sweat of his brow his seal was on it yet—that great receiver Nature must give it up. It was not the repair of an estate that they would compass: it was the restoration of the kingdom of man.

Marking the light in his employee's eyes, Colonel Winchester could have flung up his cap. Opening his heart, he spoke with a rough eloquence of the great days the place had seen, of lords and ladies who had slept at the house, of coaches that had rumbled over that broken bridge, of a troop ambushed at the bend of the avenue, of a duel fought upon that sometime sward . . .

"The world 'd think me mad. In the clubs I used to belong to they'd remember that I was always a bit of a crank. To the Press I should be a curio worth three lines and a photograph of the 'Brigadier Breaks Stones' order. But there's a zest to the job you won't find in Pall Mall. There's an encouragement to go ahead that you seldom strike in this world. There's a gratitude the old place'll hand you that no reporter could ever understand..."

It was true.

As the short days went tearing by, the spirit of the place entered into Anthony's

soul. He laboured thirstily, yet not so much laboured as laid his labour as a thankoffering at his goddess's feet. counted himself happy, plumed himself on his selection for the office, thanked God nightly. But that he needed the pay, he would not have touched it. As it was, a third of it went into his tool-bag. appalling magnitude of the task never worried him-nor, for the matter of that, his fellow-workers. Master and men went toiling from dawn to dusk under a spell, busy, tireless as gnomes, faithful as knights to their trust. Their zeal was quick with the dévotion to a cause that went out with coat-armour. Rough weather might chill one iron, but another was plucked from the fire ere the first was cold. There never was seen such energy. Place and purpose together held them in thrall. couragement been needed, the death of every day showed some material gain. Foot by foot the kingdom was being restored.

Whether the goddess of the estate had charmed Patch also, it is not for me to say. He was certainly a happy fellow. Life had apparently developed into one long, glorious ramble, which nothing but nightfall could curtail. To his delight, too, Anthony and the other men showed an unexpected and eventful interest in stones and boughs and ditches and drains, and sometimes they even dragged trees along the ground for him to bark at. It is to be hoped that he also expressed his gratitude of nights....

If he has not done so this night, it is too late now, for he is stretched upon the warm bricks in a slumber which will allow of no orisons this side of to-morrow.

Let us take his tip, gentlemen. The night is young, I know, but Anthony has been abroad since cock-crow. Besides, I have led you a pretty dance. You have, in fact, tramped for miles-'tis two and an odd furlong to the old grey house alone—and the going is ill, as you know, and the night, if young, is evil. A whole gale is coming, and the woods are beside themselves. thrash of a million branches, the hoarse booming of the wind, lend to the tiny chamber an air of comfort such as no carpets nor arras could induce. The rain, too, is hastening to add its insolence to the That stutter upon the pane is its advance-guard...

Did you hear that dull crash, gentlemen? Or are not your ears practised enough to

pluck it out of the welter of rugged harmony? It was an elm, sirs, an old fellow, full of years, gone to his long home. For the last time the squirrels have swung from his boughs: for the last time the rooks have sailed and cawed about his proud old head. To-morrow there will be another empty stall in that majestic quire which it has taken Time six hundred years to fill.....

The distant crash brought Lyveden out of a sleep-ridden reverie. For a second he listened intently, as if he hoped that he had been mistaken, and that the sound he had heard had been but a trick of the wind. Then he gave a short sigh and knocked out hi pipe.

"And you've had no answer?" said the Judge, snapping a wafer betwixt his fingers and thumb.

His guest shook his head. Then he hastened to enlighten the wine-waiter, who had been about to refill his glass with port and had construed the gesture as a declension of the nectar.

"Never a line," he said shortly. "Of course the letter may never have reached him. But, if it did, he may not have thought it worth while . . . I mean, I wrote very guardedly."

"Naturally," said the Judge, "naturally.

Still, I should have thought——"

The two men sat facing each other across a small mahogany table from which the cloth had been drawn. The surface thus exposed gave back such light as fell upon it enriched and mellowed. In this it was typical of the room, which turned the common air into an odour of luxury.

Servants, perfectly trained, faultlessly groomed, stepped noiselessly to and fro, handing dishes, replenishing glasses, anticipating desires. A tremendous fire glowed in its massive cage; a crimson carpet and curtains of almost barbaric gravity contributed to the admirable temperature and deadened unruly noise. A brace of shaded candles to each small table made up nine several nebulæ, whose common radiance provoked an atmosphere of sober mystery, dim and convenient. Light so subdued subdued in turn the tones of the company of hosts and visitors. Conversation became an exchange of confidences; laughter was soft and low; the murmurous blend of talk flowed unremarked, yet comforted the ear. The flash of silver, the sparkle of glass, the snow of napery, gladdened the eye. No single circumstance of expediency was

unobserved, no detail of propriety was overlooked. Pomp lay in a litter which he had borrowed of Ease.

"Shall I write again?" said the solicitor. Mr. Justice Molehill stared at his port.

After a moment—

"No," he said slowly. "Not at present, at any rate. I don't want to push the matter, because I've got so very little to go on. In moving at all, I'm laying myself open to the very deuce of a snub."

"I shall get the snub," said his guest. "But that's what I'm paid for. Besides,

I'm fairly hardened."

That he evinced not the slightest curiosity regarding his mysterious instructions argued a distinction between the individual and the adviser, firmly drawn and religiously observed. For a Justice of the King's Bench suddenly to be consumed by a desire to know the names of the uncles of somebody else's footman smacked of collaboration by Gilbert and Chardenal. Once, however, the solicitor knew his client, he asked no questions. Reticence and confidence were in his eyes equally venerable. Usually he had his reward. He had it now.

"In the spring," said his companion, " of 1914 I went to Sicily. On my way back I stopped for one night at Rome. The day I left, while I was resting after luncheon, the manager of the hotel brought a priest to my room—a Catholic priest of some position, I fancy—an Englishman. can't remember his name. He spoke very civilly, and begged my instant attention.

"An old Englishman, it seemed, lay dying upon the first floor. He was all alone no relations—no servant. He could speak no Italian. Realising that he was dying, he was frantic to make a will. His frenzied attempts to convey this desire to the attendant doctor had resulted in the latter dashing into the street and stopping and returning with the first priest he.encountered. This happened to be my friend. Upon beholding him, the patient, who had hoped for a lawyer, had turned his face to the wall. Then, to his relief, he found that, though a priest, yet he was English, and begged him to fetch an attorney. priest hurried to the manager, and the manager brought him to me. . . .

"You know how much I know about wills. All the same, argument was not to be thought of. To the laity, solicitor, lawyer, barrister, and attorney are synonymous terms. Moreover, they are all will-wrights. A judge is a sort of shop-steward . . .

"Well, I drew one. To tell you the truth, I don't think it was so bad. I attended the poor man. I took his instructions. And there and then in the sick-room I drew the will upon a sheet of notepaper. signed it in my presence and that of the priest. The latter then took charge of it, with a view to getting it stamped next morning at the British Consulate. both had some hazy idea that that was desirable.

"I left Rome the same night.

"Gradually—we've all had a lot to think about in the last seven years-I forgot the whole incident. Then, some two months ago, when I was at Brooch, a fellow gives evidence before me in a burglary case. A footman called Anthony Lyveden. For a long time I couldn't imagine where I'd heard the names before. Then something —I'll tell you what in the smoking-room brought it all back. Anthony Lyveden was the nephew of the man whose will I made, and he was named as the sole legatee.

"In a way it's no affair of mine, and yet I feel concerned. I'll tell you why. That footman was a gentleman born. Moreover, he was down on his luck. He didn't look like a fellow who'd run through money, and I think the old testator was pretty rich. He gave that impression. And for a will made in such circumstances to go astray it would be easy enough—obviously. The devil of it is, except for the name of Lyveden,

I can remember nothing else."

The solicitor sipped his port. Then—

"A search at Somerset House," he said slowly, "should give us the maiden surname of Anthony Lyveden's mother. If she had a brother . . ."

Sir Giles Molehill raised his eyes and sighed.

'And it never occurred to me," he said. "It's high time I went to the Court of

Appeal.'

Two days later his lordship received a letter informing him that a search at Somerset House had revealed the fact that a son named Anthony had been born upon the fourteenth of January, 1891, to a Mrs. Katharine Lyveden, formerly Roach.

As he read it, the Judge exclaimed audibly. The note which he wrote there and then shall speak for itself.

DEAR BLITHE.

Roach was the surname of the testator. Please go on. When you can submit a



Christian name to my memory, please do so. I am not sure that it will respond, but we can try.

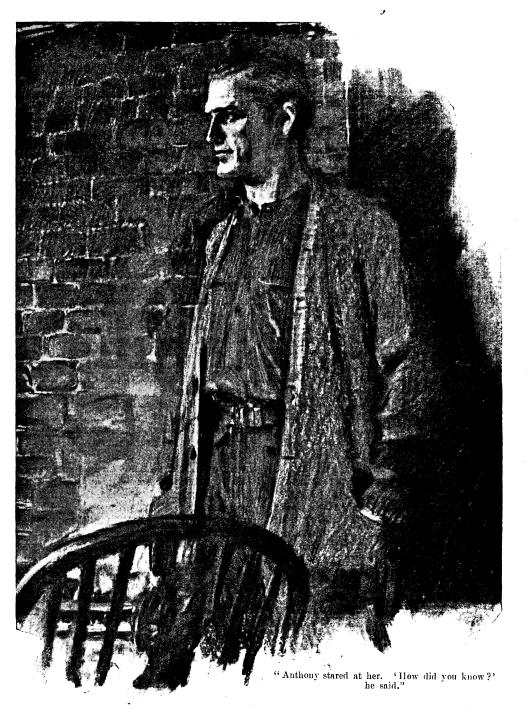
Yours sincerely,

GILES MOLEHILL.

When Anthony Lyveden had been for a week at Gramarye, he had reluctantly posted a letter containing his new address. This he had done because he had promised to do it. As the letter had fallen into the box, he had prayed fervently, but without the faintest hope, that it might never be delivered. A galley-slave who has broken ship and won sanctuary does not advertise his whereabouts with a light heart. He may be beyond pursuit, yet—he and the

galley are both of this world; things temporal only keep them apart, and if the master came pricking, with a whip in his belt . . . You must remember that Anthony had

been used very ill. At first, bound to the oar of Love, he had pulled vigorously and found the sea silken, his chains baubles. Then a storm had arisen. In his hands the docile oar had become a raging termagant, and, when he would have been rid of it, the baubles had opposed his will. He had been dragged and battered unspeakably. Over all, the lash had been



laid upon his bare shoulders; and that with a nicety of judgment which should have been foreign to so white a wrist and to eyes that could look so tender. Now that he had escaped out of hell, it was not surprising that he was loth to discover his refuge. Still, a promise must be respected . . .

For that matter, supplications do not always go empty away. The answer to Anthony's came in the shape of a fire which attacked the last coach but one upon a London train and partially destroyed two mail-bags before its flames were subdued. It follows that, though he did not know it,

such friends as the ex-officer had knew no more where he was than did the man in the moon.

It is here convenient, believe me, to go

imagining.

We have looked into Anthony's mind at the hour when he posted his letter. Had he posted it this nineteenth day of January, instead of six weeks ago, and we, as before, peered into his brain-pan, we should have found his supplication that the missive might go astray even more urgent. We should have noted that, while he was just as fearful to be reminded of the galley and the tall dark ganger with the red, red mouth and the merciless thong, he also viewed with alarm the possibility of any distraction from his work. The galley-slave was become a votary.

Let us be quite clear about it.

Anthony had come to Gramarye to try to forget. In this he was steadily unsuccess-At the end of a month he had not advanced one inch. His love for Valerie was as breathless, haunting, wistful as it had ever been. The whole of the kingdom of his heart was hers alone, and, so far as he could see, like to remain hers only for the rest of his life. Since, therefore, he could not dispatch Memory, he sought to immure her. Since Valerie's sovereignty was so fast stablished that it could not be moved, he sought to rule his heart out of his system. Had it been possible, he would, like Æsop's Beaver, have ripped the member from him and gone heartless ever after. The Fabulous Age being dead, Anthony made the best shift he could, and strove to bury kingdom and queen together so deep within him that their existence should not trouble his life. If he could not put out the light, he would hide it under a bushel. It occurred to him that his mind, appropriately occupied, should make an excellent bushel—appropriately occupied He resolved that Gramarye should have his mind. Of this he would make a kingdom, mightier and more material than that of his heart. The trouble was, his mind, though more tractable, liked Valerie's occupation, found it desirable, and clung to its present tenant for all it was worth. By no means dismayed, Anthony, as before, had recourse to ejection by crowding out . . . Two things, however, made this attempt more formidable. First, he did not have to be for ever scouring the highways and hedges for a new tenantry; Gramarye was always at hand. Secondly, though Anthony

did not know it, there was no need for Gramarye to be compelled to come in. He was pressing an invitation upon one who had invited herself. The hooded personality of the place had stolen up to the door: already its pale fingers were lifting the latch... Before he had been in the Cotswolds for seven weeks, she had thrust and been thrust into the doorway.

It was the thin end of the wedge.

Each passing day fell upon the wedge like the stroke of a hammer. Sometimes they drove it: oftener the wedge stayed still where it was. But it never slipped When it was stubbornest, and the days seemed to lose their weight, when Valerie's hold seemed indefeasible, when the woods were quick with memory, when Anthony heard an old faint sigh in the wind, and the laughter of a brook fluted the note of a soft familiar voice, then more than once that strange, cool, silvery call had stolen out of the distance, to melt upon the air as soon as uttered and leave its echoes at play upon the edge of earshot . . . Before the echoes had died, the wedge would have moved.

For a master at once so tireless and so devotedly served, Colonel Winchester handled his team with a prudence which must have chafed his infatuation to the bone. Of every week, five and a half days did they labour and not an hour more. No matter how loudly a chore called for completion, no matter how blackly wind and weather were threatening the half-done work, upon Wednesday afternoon and Sunday not an axe was lifted, not a cord hitched, not a nail driven. It was a wise rule and fruitful. The Sabbath rest leavened the labour of the week. As for the midweek breathing space, the men were not monks; however zealous their studies of the lilies of the field, the provision of meat and raiment must have some crumbs of consideration . . .

It was, indeed, these two commodities which had taken Lyveden to Girdle this January day. The milkman, the baker, the grocer, had all to be interviewed and paid. A kindly farmer's wife, who baked fresh meat for him and sent it thrice a week to his cottage in the shape of a cold pasty, had to be visited and made to accept payment for a slab of sweet fresh butter he had not asked for. A little linen had to be picked up . . .

By half-past three Anthony's errands were run. He had dealt with them quickly,

for there was work waiting at the cottage; a load of fuel had to be stacked, and Patch had been bogged that morning and was, consequently, fit neither to be seen nor Besides, there was a book about forestry which Winchester had lent him . . . Anthony bent his steps homeward eagerly

enough. As he left the village, a horsewoman overtook him, shot him a sharp glance, and passed ahead. Her habit was mired, and it was evident that she had had a fall hunting. That Anthony did not remark this was because he was regarding her horse. There was nothing unusual about the animal, but of the two beings it alone touched his attention. If Valerie was like to be buried, at least she had killed all other women stone dead.

It was consequently in some annoyance that, upon rounding the second bend of the infamous Gallowstree Hill, he saw the lady before him, with her mount across the road, placidly regarding a hunting-crop which lay upon the highway. As he came up—

"Would you be so good?" said the girl.

"With pleasure."

Anthony picked up the crop and offered it. As he did so, the horse became restive, and there was quite a substantial bickering before his mistress could accept the whip. Anthony, if he thought about it at all, attributed the scene to caprice. In this he was right, yet wrong. Caprice was the indirect reason. The direct cause was the heel of a little hunting-boot adroitly applied to a somewhat sensitive flank. no doubt at all that Anthony had a lot to learn.

Out of the broil stepped Conversation

lightly enough.

"You must forgive us both," said the lady, turning her mount towards Gramarye. " We've had a bad day. Quite early on we took the deuce of a toss, and I lost him. A labourer caught him, and then let him go again. By the time I'd got him, the hounds were miles away. I'd never 've believed it was possible to go so fast or so far as I did and never hear of them. After two solid hours I gave it up."

Anthony was walking by her side.

listening gravely.

"What a shame!" he said. Then: "I

hope you weren't hurt."

Shoulder's a bit stiff. I fell on the point. But a hot bath'll put that right. D'you live here?"

About a mile on. At Gramarye."

The girl stared at him.

"Gramarye?"

"Not at the house," said Anthony. live in the cottage at the south-west end of the park."

"Oh, I know. D'you work there, then?"

Anthony nodded. "That's my job."

"So you're Major Lyveden?" said the

Anthony looked up.

"How did you know?" he said.

A pair of large brown eyes regarded him steadily. Then the red lips parted, and Andrè Strongi'th'arm flung back

handsome head and laughed merrily.
"Did you think," she said, panting, "did you really think that you could come to dwell in the parish of Girdle, and the fact escape the notice of the other parishioners?" She hesitated, and a suggestion of mockery crept into her voice. "Or are you too wrapped up in the estate to think about anything else?"

"I believe I am," said Anthony.

"I beg your pardon," said Miss Strongi'th'arm with an elaborate courtesy. "Thank you very much for enduring me for three minutes. If I'd-"

Her hunter broke into a trot.

"No, no," cried Anthony, running beside her. "Please walk again." She pulled the horse up. "I didn't mean to be rude. I

"I should leave it alone," said Andre. "You'll only make it worse. You're much too honest. Besides, I love the country, and I-I think," she added dreamily, "I can understand."

"Can you?"

The eagerness in Anthony's voice was arrestingly pathetic, and Andre started at the effect of her idle words.
"I—I think so. I've given water to a

thirsty plant. . . . I suppose the gratitude of

a landscape. . . .

"That's it," said Lyveden excitedly. "You've got it in one. The place is so pathetically grateful for every stock and stone you set straight, that you just can't hold your hand. And all the time the work's so fascinating that you don't deserve any thanks. You seem to get deeper in debt every day. You're credited with every cheque you draw. If I stopped, it'd haunt me."

"It is plain," said Andrè, "that, when you die, 'Gramarye' will be graven upon your heart. All the same, are you sure you were meant for this? Aren't there things in life besides the straightening of stocks and stones?"

"The War's over," said Lyveden.

"I know. But there was a world before 1914. I think your occupation's wonderful, but isn't it a little unnatural—unfair to yourself and others—to give it the whole of your life? As estates go, I fancy the possibilities of Eden were even more amazing than those of Gramarye—I daresay you won't admit that, but then you're biassed—and yet the introduction of Eve was considered advisable."

"With the result that——"Miss Strongi'th'arm laughed.

"With the result that you and I are alive this glorious day, with our destinies in our pockets and the great round world at our feet. I wonder whether I ought to go into a nunnery."

"I've tried kicking the world," said Anthony, "and I'm still lame from it. And Fate picked my pocket months and menths

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"So Faint Heart turned into the first monastery he came to," said Andre, leaning forward and caressing her hunter's neck. "What d'you think of that, Joshua?"

As if by way of comment, the horse snorted, and Anthony found himself joining

in Miss Strongi'th'arm's mirth.

"There's hope for you yet," gurgled that lady. "Your sense of humour is still kicking. And that under the mud appears to be a scrap of a dog. When you take your final yows, will you give him to me?"

"In my monastery," said Lyveden, "monks are allowed to keep dogs. There is

also no rule against laughter."

"Isn't there, now?" flashed Andrè. "I wonder why? There's no rule against idleness either, is there?" She laughed bitterly. "Rules are made to cope with inclinations. Where there's no inclination——" She broke off suddenly and checked her horse. Setting her hand upon Lyveden's shoulder, she looked into his eyes. "You laughed just now, didn't you? When did you last laugh before that?"

Anthony stared back. The girl's intuition was uncanny. Now that he came to think of it, Winchester and his little band never laughed over their work—never. There was —she was perfectly right—there was no inclination. Eagerness, presumably, left no room for Merriment. Or else the matter was too high, too thoughtful. Not that they laboured sadly—far from it. Indeed, their

daily round was one long festival. But Laughter was not at the board. Neither forbidden, nor bidden to the feast, she just stayed away. Yet Mirth was no hang-back.

... Anthony found himself marvelling. "Who are you?" he said suddenly.

For a second the brown eyes danced; then their lids hid them. With flushed cheeks the girl sat up on her horse.

"Who am I? I'm a daughter of Eve, Major Lyveden. Eve, who cost Adam his Gramarye. So you be careful. Bar your door of nights. Frame rules against laughter and idleness—just to be on the safe side. And next time a girl drops her erop——"

"I hope," said Anthony gravely, "I hope I shall be behind her to pick it up and have the honour of her company to turn

a mile into a furlong."

"O-o-oh, blasphemy!" cried Andrè, pretending to stop her ears. "Whatever would Gramarye say? Come on, Joshua."

The next moment she was cantering up

the broad white way. . . .

As she rounded a bend, she flung up an arm and waved her crop cheerily.

Anthony waved back.

Miss Valerie French sat in her library at Bell Hammer, with her elbows propped on the writing-table and her head in her hands. She had been free of the great room ever since she could remember. Long before her father's death she had been accustomed to sit curled in its great chairs, to lie upon the huge tiger-skin before the hearth, or gravely to face her father across that very table and draw houses and flights of steps and stiff-legged men and women with flat feet upon his notepaper, while Mr. French dealt with his correspondence. Always, when the picture was completed, it would be passed to him for his approval and acceptance; and he would smile and thank her and audibly identify the objects portrayed; and, if he were not too busy, they would remind him of a tale, the better to follow which she must leave her chair and climb on to his knee. . . .

Then he had died—ten years after her birth, nine years after her mother's death. There were who said he had died of a broken heart—a heart broken nine years before. It may have been true. Valerie loved the

room more than ever. . . .

When she was come of age, she made it her boudoir. Flowers and silks and silver lit up its stateliness. Beneath the influence of a grand piano and the soft-toned cretonnes

upon the leather chairs, the solemnity of the chamber melted into peace. The walls of literature, once so severe, became a kindly background, wearing a wise, grave smile.

Such comfort, however, as the room extended was to-day lost upon Valerie. Beyond the fact that it was neither noisome nor full of uproar, Miss French derived no consolation from an atmosphere to which she had confidently carried her troubles for at least twenty years. The truth is, she was sick at heart. There was no health in her. She had been given a talent and had cast it into the sea. She had stumbled upon a jewel, more lustrous than any she had dreamed this earth could render, and of her folly she had flung it into the draught. She had suspected him who was above suspicion, treated her king like a cur, unwarrantably whipped from her doors the very finest gentleman in all the world. What was a thousand times worse, he had completely vanished. Had she known where he was, she would have gone straight to him and, kneeling upon her knees, begged his Her pride was already in forgiveness. tatters, her vanity in rags: could she have found him, she would have stripped the two mother-naked. In a word, she would have done anything which it is in the power of a mortal to do to win back that wonder of happiness which they had together built It must be remembered that Valerie was no fool. She realised wholly that without Anthony Lyveden Life meant nothing at all. She had very grave doubts whether it would, without him, ever mean anything again. And so, to recover her loss, she was quite prepared to pay to the uttermost farthing. The trouble was, the wares were no longer for sale; at any rate, they were not exposed to her eyes. The reflection that, after a little, they might be offered elsewhere and somebody else secure them, sent Valerie almost out of her mind. And it might happen any day—easily. The wares were so very attractive. . . . Moreover, if their recovery was to beggar her, by a hideous paradox, failure to repurchase the wares meant ruin absolute. . . .

When Valerie French had discovered that her jealousy of her lover was utterly baseless, she had had the sense to make no bones about it, but to strike her colours at once. That Anthony was not there to witness her capitulation did not affect her decision. If she was to have their intelligent assistance, the sooner others saw it and appreciated her plight, so much the better for her. Only her

aunt and the Alisons could possibly help at all; to those four she spoke plainly, telling the cold facts and feeling the warmth of well-doing in tearing her pride to tatters. Then she rent her vanity and begged their services to find and, if necessary, plead for her with the ex-officer. The Alisons had promised readily, but there was no confidence in their eyes. Lady Touchstone, however, had sent her niece's hopes soaring. She had reason, it seemed, to expect a letter. Major Lyveden had promised to let her have his address. And, he being a man of his word, it was bound to come—bound to come. . . .

For more than a month Valerie hung upon every incoming post. Then she knew that the letter had gone astray.

For the hundredth time Miss French read through the three letters which lay before her upon the table, written in the firm, clear hand of Anthony Lyveden. Except she drew upon the store of Memory, she had nothing else at all that spoke of him. Hence the common envelopes became three reliquaries, the cheap thin notepaper relics above all price, piteously hallowed by the translation of the scribe.

The letters affording no comfort, Valerie rose and moved to a great window which looked on to the terrace and thence into the park. Instantly the memory of one sweet September night rose up before hera night when he and she had paced those flags together, while music had floated out of the gallery, and the stars had leaped in the heavens, and the darkness had quivered at the breath of the cool night air; when he had wrapped his love in a fairy tale and she had listened with a hammering heart. . . when he at last had put her hand to his lips, and she had given back the homage before he could draw away. . . .

The terrace was worse than the letters, and Valerie turned to the books. Idly she moved along the wall, reading the names upon the calf bindings and not knowing whether she read them or no. A sudden desire to look at the topmost shelves made her cross to the great step-ladder and climb to its balustered pulpit. Before she was half-way there the desire had faded, but she Come to the top, she went listlessly on. turned to let her eye wander over the nearest shelf. Old, little-read volumes only met her gaze—Hoole's works, Jessey, John Sadler, Manley. . . . Of the ten small volumes containing Miss Manley's outpourings, the seventh was out of place, and Valerie stretched out a hand to straighten it. As she did so, she saw the title—The Lost Lover. For a moment she stared at it. Then she turned and, descending one step of the ladder, sat down on the edge of the pulpit and buried her face in her hands.

We will leave her there with her beauty, her shapely head bowed, her exquisite figure hunched with despair, her cold, white, pointed fingers pressed tight upon those glorious temples, her little palms hiding the misery of that striking face, her knees convulsively closed, that shining foot tucked beneath the other in the contortion of grief. We will leave her there on the ladder, learning that sorry lesson which Great Love only will set its favourites when they have gone a-roving after false gods in whom is no faith.

At half-past six upon the following Monday evening Lyveden returned to his cottage with Patch at his heels. In spite of the hard frost, the work had gone well. A bridge had been finished which should laugh to scorn the elements for a long century; a sore-needed staff had been set beneath the arm-pit of a patriarch oak; a truant stream had been tucked into its rightful bed. It had been a good day.

Arrived at his door, Anthony turned and looked upward. The cold white brilliance of the stars stared winking back; the frozen silence of the firmament hung like a magic cloak upon the shoulders of darkness; the pool of Night lay in a breathless trance, ice-cold and fathomless. Anthony

opened the door and passed in.

Within three minutes the lamp and lantern were lighted and a fire was crackling upon the hearth; within ten, fuel had been fetched and water drawn from the well; within twenty, the few odd jobs on whose performance the comfort of regularity depended had been disposed of; and by seven o'clock the Sealyham had had his dinner, and his master, washed and groomed, was free to sit down to a substantial meal.

At the first glance, the latter's dress was highly reminiscent of the warfare so lately dead. The shade and stuff of the stout breeches, the heavy ankle boots, the grey shirt-cuff emerging from the sleeve of the coarse cardigan, were old familiar friends. The fact that Lyveden had laid aside his collar heightened the comparison. Only his gaiters struck a discordant note. These were of good box-cloth and buttoned from knee to ankle. Tight-fitting about the calf,

but not shaped to the leg, they fell well over the tops of the heavy boots, resting, indeed, upon the insteps. They suited Anthony, for whom they might have been made, admirably. They were, moreover, a wholly redeeming feature, and turned his garb from that of a thousand corporals into the homely attire of a gentleman farmer. So soon as you saw them, you forgot the War. The style of them was most effective. It beat the spear into a pruning hook. With this to leaven them, the rough habiliments were most becoming. In a word, they supplied the very setting which manhood should have; and since Anthony, sitting there at his meat, was the personification of virility, they served, as all true settings should, by self-effacement to magnify their treasure. The ex-officer might have stepped out of Virgil's Ecloques.

He had finished his meal, cleared away the remains, set the table for breakfast, and was in the act of filling his pipe, when the Sealyham growled. Anthony, whose ears were becoming sharper every day, listened intently. The next moment came a sharp tapping upon the door. In an instant Patch was across the room, barking

furiously....

Laying down his pipe and tobacco, Anthony followed the terrier and, picking him up in his arms, threw open the door.

him up in his arms, threw open the door.

"So you didn't bar it, after all," said a mocking voice. "Well, my conscience is clear. I warned you. And since you are at home and the door is open, will you extend your hospitality to a benighted Eve?"

Anthony stepped to one side.

"I'm all alone," he said hesitatingly.
"So am I," said Andrè, entering. "Oh, what a lovely fire! I'm just perished," she

added, crossing to spread her hands to the blaze. "It's not a night to be motoring."

Anthony shut the door and put the terrier

down. The latter ran to the lady and sniffed the hem of her garments. After a careful scrutiny he turned away. . . .

"It's not a night," said Anthony, "to be walking the countryside in evening-dress.

Have you had a breakdown?"

"Not that I know of," replied Miss Strongi'th'arm. "Don't be so modest. I happened to be passing and I happened to see your light, so I thought I'd come and see how Adam was getting on. Is it against the rules?"

"I'm all alone," said Lyveden steadily.

" Is that an order to quit?"

"I'm only thinking of you," said Anthony.

"I know I've dropped out of things lately, and the world goes pretty fast, but I'd hate people to talk about you." He felt himself flushing, and went on jerkily: "I mean, I don't honestly know what's done nowadays and what isn't. If you're quite easy... You see, I'm older than you," he added desperately.

There was a little silence. Then--

"Don't stop," said André, with a mischievous smile. "I've never been lectured by a monk before. Besides, I collect points of view."

"Is mine extraordinary?"

"An exceptionally rare specimen. I shall always treasure it." She produced a cigarette case. "May I smoke a cigarette? Or is that also against the rules?"

Without a word Anthony struck a

match...

"Thanks," said the lady. She unbuttoned her coat. "It's nice and warm in here," she added comfortably. "Oh, please don't look so reproachful! I just can't bear it. I'm not doing anything wrong, and it makes me feel awful. Of course, if you don't want me—"

"You know it isn't that," he protested.
"I only thought possibly—I mean . . ."
He broke off helplessly and touched the back of a chair. "Wouldn't you like to sit

down?"

"Shall you sit down if I do?" Anthony shook his head, "Then I shan't either. I'd much rather stand." And, with that, my lady set her back against the side of the fireplace and crossed her shapely ankles.

It must be confessed that she made an arresting picture. Mean as the light was, it woke the luminous beauty of her auburn hair; a sprinkling of freckles gave to her exquisite complexion a jolly look; the bright brown eyes and the merry mouth were those of a Bacchante. Above her plain black frock her throat and chest showed dazzling white; below, the black silk stockings shone with a lustre which was not that of silk alone; over all, the voluminous mink coat framed her from head to toe with a rich luxury.

"And how," said Andrè, "is Gramarye?

Have you finished the bridge?"

Anthony stared at her.

"How did you know?" he said.

Miss Strongi'th'arm shrugged her fair shoulders.

"What does it matter?" she said. "Let's talk about something else—if you can. Have you thought over what I said?

No. I can see you haven't. Well, well. . . . Have you laughed since we met?"

"I—I don't think I have."

" Ah. . . . Why not ? "

"There's been nothing to laugh at. The work's big-serious."

"Wasn't the War serious?"

Anthony crossed to the hearth and kicked a log into flame.

"I suppose so," he said reluctantly.

"Yet you laughed every day."

"Yes, but——

"But what?"

"The War was different. You can't compare the two. Then you laughed because it was better than crying. Now there's no reason for it. There's no time on your hands. The work's too urgent—too solemn. It's like restoring a cathedral. You don't feel you want to laugh." He swung round and faced her. "There's a religion in the atmosphere; Gramarye's a sort of temple; when you're in the woods, instinctively you lower your voice; there's something sacred about the place; there's—"

Miss Strongi'th'arm dropped her cigarette and caught her vis-à-vis by the shoulders. "Don't!" she cried. "Don't! It's all

wrong! The place isn't sacred. It's absurd. You're infatuated. Gramarye's getting into your blood. Soon you won't be able to think of anything else. And gradually it'll eat up your life-your splendid glor ous life. I know what I'm talking about. D'you hear ? I say I know! I've seen one man go under, and now you're going-you!" The flame died out of her voice, leaving it tender and passionate. "And you're too wonderful a thing, lad; you're too perfect a specimen; you're too strong and gentle . . . too honest . . . Ah "-her hands slipped from his shoulders and her eyes dropped— "you needn't look so reproachful. I know I'm a rotter. I dropped my crop on purpose the other day, because I wanted to talk to you; and I lied to my mother and said I was dining out to-night, and then came here, because . . . " Anthony put out an appealing hand. The girl laughed bitterly. "All right. I won't say it." She started feverishly to fasten her coat. "It's about time I was going, isn't it? About time . . . "

In silence Anthony passed with her to the

door.

There was simply nothing to say.

Together they walked to her car, a wellfound coupé, standing dark and silent upon the wasted track, facing the London road. Andrè opened its door, thrust in a groping hand . . . For a moment her fingers hunted. Then two shafts of light leapt from the head-lamps. A second later the near sidelamp showed Anthony how pale was her face . . .

The lights in the car went up, and Andre picked up her gloves. Standing with her back to Lyveden, she pulled them on fiercely, but her hands were shaking, and the fastening of the straps was a difficult business.

Patch, who had come with them and was facing the opposite way, put his head on one side and stared up the line of the track. Then he trotted off into the darkness . . .

The straps fastened, Andrè turned about.

Anthony put out his hand. "Good-bye," he said gently.

For a moment the girl looked at him. Then she gave a little sob and, putting her arms about his neck, drew down his head and kissed him frantically. A moment later she was leaning wearily against the car, with the sleeve of her right arm across her eyes. As she let it fall, Winchester stepped out of the darkness with Patch at his heels.

"Andrè?" he said. And then again, "Andrè?" Anthony swung on his heel and faced the speaker. The latter stared at him with smouldering eyes. "Lyveden?" he said hoarsely.

There was an electric silence.

Then Anthony turned to Miss Strongi'-th'arm.

"I most humbly apologise," he said.
"My feelings got the better of me. I pray that you will try to forgive me." He turned to Winchester. "This lady needed some water for her radiator, and came to my door—"

"You blackguard!" said Winchester.

" You---"

" It's a lie!" flamed Andrè.

The cold steel of her tone fairly whistled.

Instinctively both men started.

"It's a lie, Richard. He's the cleanest, straightest man that ever breathed. He'd no idea who I was. He hasn't now. He never

knew my name till you said it. I forced myself upon him the other day. I forced myself upon him to-night. And he's-he's just turned me down . . . He said what he did just now to try and shield me. But he's blameless. It was I who-made the running. And I'm glad you saw it. Glad!" She tore off her left glove. "Because it's your own fault. It's eighteen months since I promised to be your wife. Eighteen solid months. And I'm tired—sick of waiting-fed up. First it was Russia: then the North of France: then—Gramarye. Gramarye!" She flung back her head and laughed wildly. Then she snatched a ring from her finger and hurled it on to the ground. "There's the ring you gave me. Heaven knows why I didn't give it you back yesterday—months ago. I'd reason enough. I suppose I still hoped . . . But now you've killed it. I don't even care what happens to you. You've messed up my life, you've messed up your own, and, what's a million times worse, you're doing your level best to mess up his.

Upon the last words her voice broke piteously, and Andrè covered her eyes. So she stood for a moment, white-faced, her lips trembling.... Then she whipped into the car and slammed the door. A moment later the engine was running. She let in the clutch, and the car moved

forward . . .

As she turned on to the London road, she changed into second speed . . . into third . . . top . . .

The two men stood as she had left them, motionless, the little white dog eyeing them

curiously.

The steady purr of the engine grew fainter and fainter.

When it had quite died, Anthony turned and touched the other upon the shoulder.

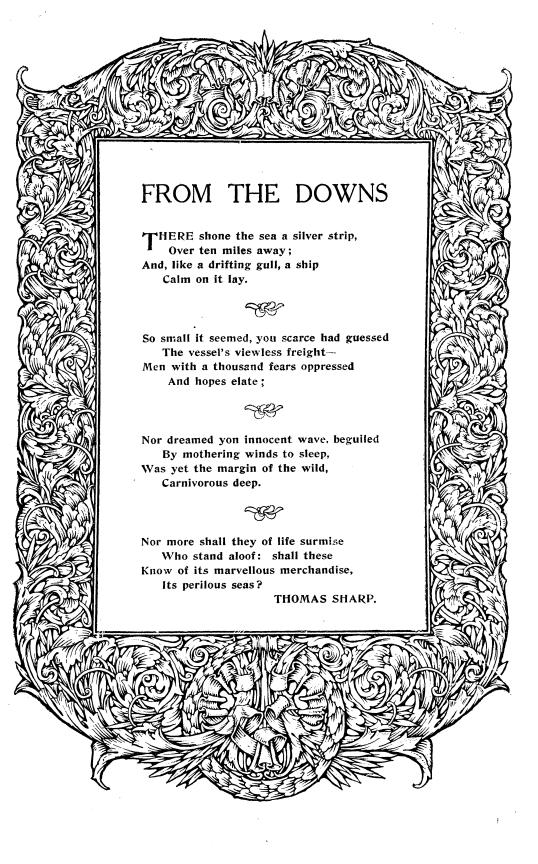
"There's always Gramarye," he said.

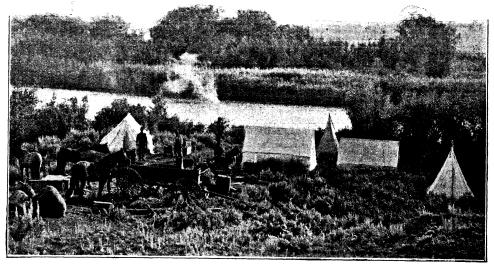
For a moment the giant peered at him

For a moment the giant peered at him. Then he straightened his bowed shoulders and threw up his head.

"Yes," he shouted, "yes. There's always

Gramarye!"





THE FOSSIL-HUNTERS' CAMP ON THE BANKS OF RED DEER RIVER, ALBERTA, CANADA.

HUNTING BIG GAME OF OTHER DAYS

HOW THE HUGE SKELETONS OF PREHISTORIC ANIMALS ARE DISCOVERED AND PRESERVED

By HAROLD J. SHEPSTONE, F.R.G.S.

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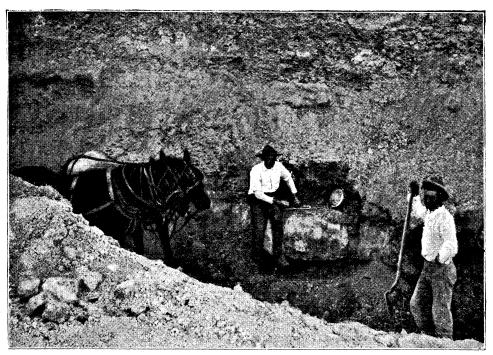
HE recent discovery of the fossilised bones of a new crested Dinosaur—one of those giant land animals that flourished millions of years ago—in Red Deer Canyon, Alberta, Canada, has called attention to the present-day work of the fossil-hunter.

During the last decade or so these men, who make it their business to hunt for the remains of extinct animals, have over and over again astonished the scientific world by their remarkable finds. Our natural history museums to-day boast of colossal skeletons of the huge beasts of the past, whose bones were discovered in remote parts of the earth by these enthusiastic hunters of this strange "game." They have unearthed huge lizards that weighed tons and measured eighty feet and more in length; more than

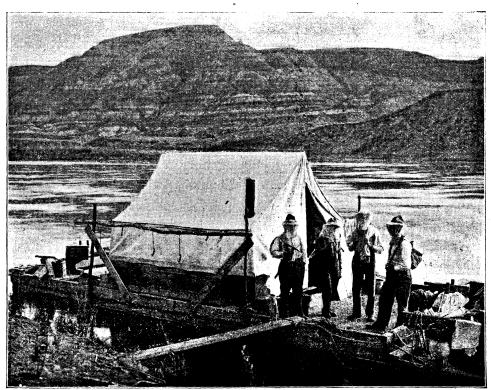
one monster rhinoceros; strange horses that make the present-day creature look a mere pigmy; mammoth tigers and huge turtles, and giant flesh-eating birds, veritable monsters of the air, which have enabled the scientists to read the wonderful wild life of the days of long ago.

But fossil-hunting is much like gold-hunting. The explorer never knows when he will strike it rich. He may remain in the field a whole season, toiling daily under the scorching sun and enduring much privation, and at the end be able to show nothing for his labour. On the other hand, he may strike it rich, and startle the scientific world with a find that will upset the text-books and existing theories regarding the form and habits of certain prehistoric creatures.

It was Mr. Walter Granger, a scientist



EXCAVATING A MAMMAL STRATUM BENEATH THE SANDSTONE LAYER ON WHICH THE MAN IS SEEN SITTING.



FOSSIL-HUNTERS, NETTED AGAINST MOSQUITO ATTACKS, PROSPECTING ALONG THE BANKS OF RED DEER RIVER, ALBERTA, CANADA.

attached to the Museum of Natural History in New York, who stumbled across the greatest deposit that has so far been unearthed of the fossilised remains of extinct animals.

Some few years ago he was going over a portion of the "Bad Lands" of Wyoming with a party of adventurers, when they came upon the remains of a sheep-herder's cabin. Glancing casually down at the jumble of "stones," Mr. Granger thought they looked strange. Picking one up, he carefully examined it.

"This is a fossilised bone," he declared to one of his companions, "and this"—

known to scientists the world over. The locality forms a vast graveyard for the immense lizards known as Dinosaurs, as well as strange horses that lived in the days of long ago, crocodiles older than any that ever floated down the Nile, and mammoth turtles. It is by far the greatest huntingground for these huge animals of the past that has ever been discovered.

The following year Professor Henry F. Osborn, of the American Museum, visited the region, and at Como Bluffs, some ten miles from the site of Bone Cabin Quarry, found almost complete skeletons of the Diplodocus and the Brontosaurus. The



DINOSAUR AND OTHER TRACKS WHICH PROVE THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH CREATURES.

looking at another dingy-coloured object
—"is the remains of a Brontosaurus."

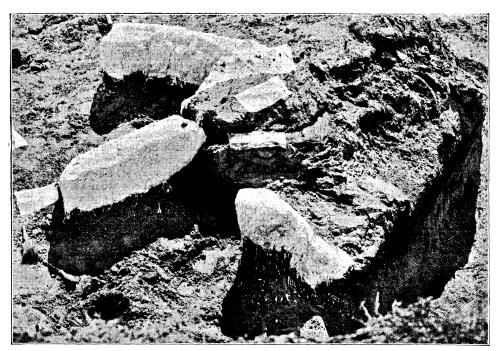
Realising that the bones the sheep-herder had thrown together to support his home had probably been taken from the ground near by, Mr. Granger procured a shovel and began digging up the earth.

After a few hours' work his spade struck against a hard substance which it could not penetrate. Working around it, he finally unearthed another piece—a single bone longer than an ordinary man. It was a portion of a huge prehistoric lizard, a most valuable find.

The spot was then and there christened "Bone Cabin Quarry," and as such is

interest of the whole scientific world was aroused, and the leading museums of America and Europe dispatched expeditions to the region to search for the fossil remains of these great beasts of prehistoric days.

As a result, a new vocation may be said to have been born—that of fossil-hunting. Whereas the men who made it their life's work to search for these bones in the desolate parts of the earth could almost be counted on the fingers of your hands, fossil-hunting became almost a craze, and scores of men entered with zest into the calling, attracted by the high prices museums were willing to pay for complete skeletons. Some attached themselves to the museums



EXCAVATING THE SKELETON OF THE NEW CRESTED DINOSAUR, THE MONOCLONIUS, IN A SAND CREEK AT RED DEER CAMP, ALBERTA.



DÎNOSAUR SKULL AND JAWS IN SITE AS EXCAVATED IN THE "BAD LANDS" OF NEBRASKA.

and toiled for a regular wage and a bonus upon their finds, while not a few worked independently, selling their strange wares in the highest market. Every year the American Museum in New York sends out three or four of these exploring expeditions. Sometimes a party spends two or three seasons in the field before striking anything of value. The other day, for instance, one hit upon the remains of the Orohuppus (a mountain horse), one of the missing links in the horse evolution. That party had been in the field for four seasons before they

that it took two men two years to restore the missing parts, and almost three years to mount them. The fact is, the collection, preparation, and mounting of this gigantic fossil proved a task of extraordinary difficulty. No museum had ever before attempted to mount so large a skeleton, and the great weight and fragile character of the bones made it necessary to devise special methods to give each bone a rigid and complete support, as otherwise it would soon break in pieces from its own weight. A powerful scaffolding, twenty-five feet



THE MUMMIFIED SKIN OF A DINOSAUR: ONE OF THE FINDS OF THE FOSSIL-HUNTER IN PROOF OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE PREHISTORIC ANIMAL.

stumbled across this treasure. It is largely a question of luck.

It took a gang of experienced men a whole season to excavate the massive skeleton which Mr. Granger had accidentally stumbled across. Not till then was it possible to obtain a correct idea of the immensity of the Brontosaurus. As the bones were taken out of the rocks, they were packed in special crates and dispatched to the museum in New York.

Here the bones were sorted out and preparations made for mounting them. Some idea of the length of time that work of this kind takes may be gathered from the fact high, with tackles and steel chains, had to be erected to lift the ponderous bones into position. This scaffolding was essential, the thigh bones, for instance, turning the scale at five hundred and seventy pounds. From the time the remains were found until they were on view in New York, close upon six years elapsed.

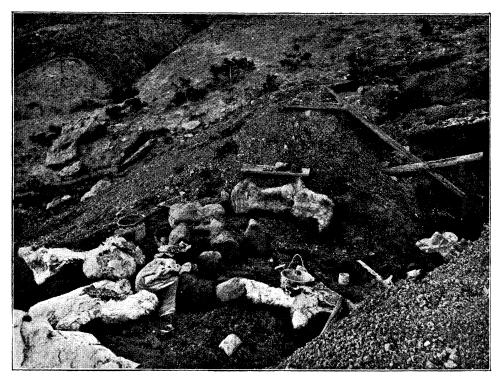
This giant skeleton—the first of its kind to be erected in any museum—measures no less than sixty-seven feet in length and towers over fifteen feet in height. It is computed that, when alive, the monster must have weighed sixty to eighty tons. It flourished during the Jurassic or Middle

Period of the Age of Reptiles, many million years ago by the modern estimate of

geological time.

To give a list of the men who have earned fame as fossil-hunters would be to quote many of the leading naturalists of the day and the curators of our natural history museums. They are all men animated by an intense love of the subject, and are ready to undergo great hardships and privations when on the track of some important extinct form.

being scalped. To camouflage his camp, his tent and wagon-sheet were made of brown duck. This blended with the colour of his surroundings, and prevented his whereabouts being discovered at any great distance even by the trained eye of an Indian. But, despite these precautions, he had several narrow shaves, and on more than one occasion escaped with his life by hiding in caves. On other occasions he has missed his footing and been precipitated down steep mountain slopes, when a friendly tree



BRONTOSAURUS REMAINS AND THE MAMMAL QUARRY FROM WHICH THEY HAVE JUST BEEN TAKEN.

Those in the foreground have already been plastered over for packing.

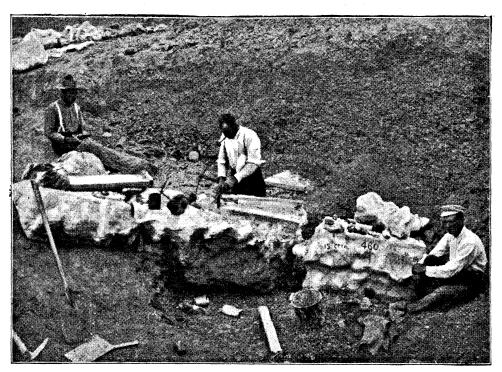
A few, like Mr. Charles H. Sternberg, have spent a lifetime in the field hunting for these prized bones. In the pursuit of his strange calling Mr. Sternberg has met with many remarkable adventures, and over and over again has narrowly escaped with his life. For the most part fossil bones are found in dried-up river beds, rocky gorges, and in desert or sterile land devoid of vegetation and water. In the early days Mr. Sternberg ran considerable risk from the Red Indians, and found it almost impossible to obtain an assistant willing to share the perils of the fossil-beds with him for fear of

or bush saved him in the nick of time from an awful death.

When the fossil-hunter has at last secured his treasure, he has often to make a roadway to it so that the wagon can be brought up and the heavy bones loaded into it. In hilly and rough country this is often a tricky proposition and fraught with danger. The least miscalculation, and horse and wagon are precipitated over the steep precipices. Mr. Sternberg thus relates such an accident. "I saw the wagon slowly begin to tip, pulling the horses over sideways, and then the whole outfit, wagon and

horses, began to roll down the steep slope. Whenever the wheels stuck up in the air, the horses drew in their feet to their bellies, and at the next turn stretched out their legs for another roll. My heart was in my mouth for fear that the driver would be killed in one of the turns, or that the wagon and all would roll into a thousand feet precipice below; but after three complete turns they landed, the horses on their feet, the wagon on its wheels, on a level ledge of sandstone, and stood there as if nothing had happened."

sun by day, the bitter cold at night, and the rough fare and general discomforts, one is not surprised to learn that malaria fever is often the result. But it is very disheartening to an explorer after he has discovered and worked, perhaps, for months upon a skeleton, which he knows many museums will take from him and pay a good price for it, to be obliged to return home broken down in health and with the precious treasure only partly excavated from its rocky bed. True, he can return to the spot when he has regained his health, but



PACKING BRONTOSAURUS REMAINS EXCAVATED IN BONE CABIN QUARRY, WYOMING.

Sudden storms, particularly if the collector is at work in a dried-up river bed, are dangerous. Tents and even wagons have been carried bodily away in these washouts, and the explorers have barely escaped with their lives, while months of laborious work have been ruined.

But the fossil-hunter's greatest enemy is water. In these parched lands fresh water is scarce, and that which is obtainable is often tainted with alkali. Drinking this has much the same effect upon the body as a dose of Epsom salts, and, if taken two or three times a day, is very weakening to the system. Added to this the scorching

he never knows what will happen to his prize in the meantime. He may find it damaged beyond repair by passing cattlemen, ignorant of its scientific value, or a rival may have removed it.

One of the most valuable of recent finds was the complete skeleton of the Tyrannosaurus, the largest flesh-eating animal that ever lived. It was discovered by Mr. Barnum Brown, of the American Museum, in the "Bad Lands" of Montana. The one aim of this beast, when alive, was to battle with every other animal that came in his way. He was the Hun of his day. When erect he stood eighteen feet high, possessed



MAMMAL REMAINS PACKED FOR TRANSIT.



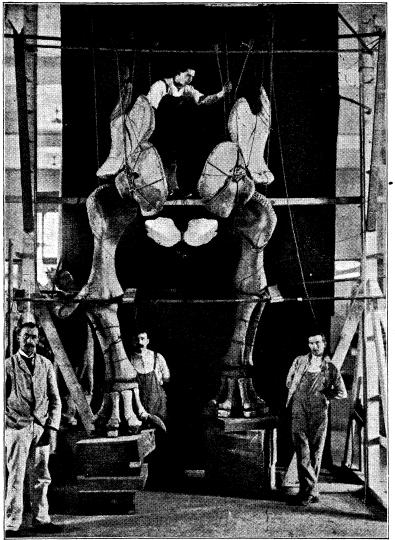
HAULING A COLLECTION TO RAHLROAD FROM THE CAMP AT THE MOUTH OF SAND CREEK, RED DEER RIVER, ALBERTA.

talons fit to hold an ox, and double-edged dagger-like teeth two and three inches long, set in a mouth a yard wide in gape.

His skeleton was discovered in some sandstone hills. The area over which the bones were scattered, and the almost vertical and twenty-five feet deep. Some of the sandstone blocks containing the bones were of huge weight and size; that holding the pelvis weighed over four thousand pounds, and required four horses to transport it to the railway.

The heaviest single specimen ever taken out of the rocks was the head of a Triceratops, a prehistoric rhinoceros. It was secured by Mr. J. B. Hatcher, and weighed, when boxed, over three tons. Complete skeletons of this extraordinary beast have now been found, and the rhinoceros of that early period was a veritable giant compared with his brother of to-day. He had a length of twentyfive feet, and carried three horns upon his head, a collar of spikes around his neck, while his body was encased in a thick coat of bony plates, But he needed such armour to protect him from the onslaughts of the giant lizards and huge flying birds that flourished in his day. These ancient creatures were anything but a happy family, and were continually at war.

When the hunter has successfully located a skeleton, the next step is to secure the bones. While some of the larger ones are unbroken, frequently the skeleton may be in a thousand pieces, some a hundred feet or more from the rest. To pick out the right ones and separate them from the others



MOUNTING THE FORE-LIMBS OF A BRONTOSAURUS: FITTING TOGETHER THE HEAVY THIGH BONES.

slope of the hill, necessitated the removal of a vast amount of material. It took two seasons to dig out the bones, and dynamite had to be used to blow away the rocks. The excavation necessary to remove this single skeleton resulted in a pit in the hillside thirty feet long, twenty feet wide,

may mean weeks of patient toiling, day after day, in the burning sun. The hunter must also know how the bones were put together by Nature. As fast as he identifies the parts he numbers each one, then packs it for its long journey to the museum.

When the bone is fragile and cracked or broken, he fills in the crevices with liquid plaster, which hardens and thus cements the derricks. Still, in spite of their great size, these bones must be uncovered very cautiously, though they have long since turned to stone. A single blow of pick or shovel may badly damage a specimen which otherwise is perfect, so when most of the earth has been removed, the rest is usually scraped away with the hands or with a light broom.



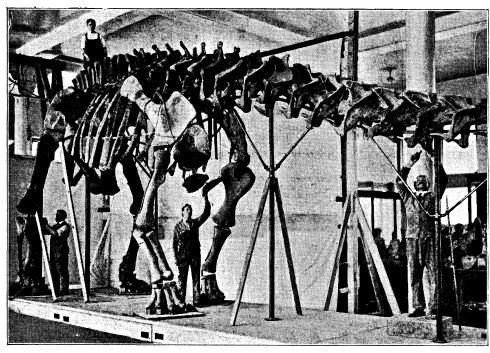
fragments together. Sometimes the surface of the bone is first covered with silk paper or thin cloth, to protect it from the air. Then the whole piece is covered with plaster as a further protection before being placed in the box or crate in which it is to be sent to the museum. This part of the work requires not a little care, for some single pieces of skeletons are so large that they must be hoisted from their beds by

The unearthing of the bones of these strange beasts of the past enabled the scientists to construct their skeletons, and was ample proof of the existence of these wonderful creatures. But there is something unreal and shadowy in a mounted heap of dried bones. Hence, when Mr. Sternberg discovered the mummified remains of a Dinosaur—the Trachodon, or "duck-billed Dinosaur"—the reality of this ancient

world and its wonderful animals was brought home to us, even as the mummy of an ancient Egyptian brings home to us the reality of the world of the Pharaohs. The mummified Dinosaur was found sprawling on his back and covered with shrunken skin—a real specimen which told the exact form of the beast and what its skin was like. It was certainly a unique find, and netted a fortune to the lucky prospector.

Another extraordinary find, though belonging to a somewhat different category, was the jaws of a prehistoric shark of the Eccene Period, found in the phosphate

he remarked that near his ranch in the Red Deer Canyon there were many large bones similar to those in the museum. Scenting the possibility of a valuable find, Mr. Barnum Brown was dispatched to the region. From Didsbury, a little town north of Calgary, he drove eastward for ninety miles to the Red Deer River. Cutting through the prairie land here, the river has formed a canyon two to five hundred feet deep and rarely more than a mile wide at the top. In places the walls are nearly perpendicular, and the river winds in its narrow valley, touching one side, then



BUILDING UP THE SKELETON OF A DINOSAUR BRONTOSAURUS.

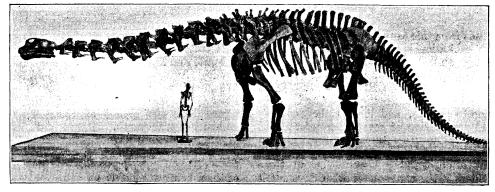
beds of South Carolina. It had two hundred teeth, and the fish was estimated to have had a length of eighty feet, quite large enough to satisfy the most ambitious of tuna or tarpon fishers, and to have made bathing in the ocean unpopular.

As already stated, the latest fossil deposits to be opened up are those of Red Deer Canyon, in the Canadian Province of Alberta. It was chance information that led to the discovery of these deposits. A little while ago Mr. J. L. Wagner paid a visit to New York, and went to the museum there to inspect its mineral collections. During a chat with the Curator of Mineralogy,

crossing to the other, so that it is impossible to follow up or down its course any great distance even on horseback.

A cursory survey revealed the existence of innumerable fossil beds, so Mr. Brown returned to the museum and made preparations to explore the region more thoroughly the following season. He decided to work the banks from a boat, and for this purpose a flat-bottomed craft was built, twelve by thirty feet in dimensions, sufficiently large to accommodate the fossil-hunters and house whatever treasures they might find.

"I have never taken a more interesting or instructive journey," said Mr. Brown on



BRONTOSAURUS, WITH THE SKELETON OF A MAN TO SHOW COMPARATIVE SIZES.

"We floated for miles through his return. picturesque solitude, unbroken save by the roar of the rapids. Our only discomfort was the clouds of mosquitoes that followed us. Especially characteristic of this canyon are the slides, where the current setting against the bank has undermined it until a mountain of earth slips into the river. In one of these slides we found several small mammal jaws and teeth of the Eocene Age. Near the town of Content, where the river bends southwards, a new series of rocks appeared, and in these our search was rewarded by finding Dinosaur bones. Specimens were found in increasing numbers as we continued our journey.

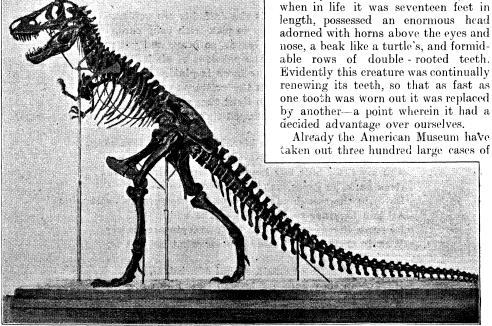
"Frequently the boat would be tied up a week or more at one camp while we searched the banks, examining the cliffs layer by layer that no fossil might escape observation. Thus box after box was added to the collection, till scarcely a cubit's space remained unoccupied on board our fossil ark."

The region was again visited the following season, since when two further expeditions have explored the canyon, hunting for the remains of prehistoric animals. As a result, many skeletons, some of them new to science, have been discovered.

Perhaps the greatest find yet made was an almost complete skeleton of a new crested

> Dinosaur, the Monoclonius. certainly no mean creature, seeing that when in life it was seventeen feet in length, possessed an enormous head adorned with horns above the eves and nose, a beak like a turtle's, and formidable rows of double-rooted teeth. Evidently this creature was continually renewing its teeth, so that as fast as one tooth was worn out it was replaced by another—a point wherein it had a decided advantage over ourselves.

> Already the American Museum have



A COMPLETE SKELETON OF THE TYRANNOSAURUS, THE LARGEST FLESH-EATING ANIMAL KNOWN.

fossils from this canyon, two-thirds of which are exhibition specimens, including twenty skulls and fourteen skeletons of large Dinosaurs, those giant animals of the past, besides many partial skeletons. This material represents many genera and species new to science, and defines the anatomy and distribution of several heretofore but partially known creatures. But the American Museum has by no means been the only institution working here. Yet all these hunters of the big game of other days admit

that, far from being exhausted, the deposits have only been scratched. For many years to come, Red Deer Canyon will be the classic locality for collecting these prehistoric treasures, it being far richer than the famous Bone Cabin Quarry in Wyoming, hitherto regarded as the richest of these strange prehistoric graveyards. Up to date, the Wyoming deposits have yielded the whole or partial remains of no fewer than seventy-three different animals, the greater majority of them being absolutely new to science.



DOWN IN THE WOODLANDS.

D^{OWN} in the woodlands the daffodils are golden, Gold for my blue boy to pick with baby care, And peeping through the leaves, so brave and yet so slender, Are primroses as pale as the paleness of his hair.

Down in the woodlands the larch is pink with blossom Pink as his cheeks, which the boisterous wind has fanned; Little lamps for fairies, to light them in the gloaming, Little lamps for fairies, clasped tight in his hot hand.

Down in the woodlands a blackbird sings his love song, Sings to his dear love of things that they will do, And my little blue boy laughs to hear their rapture; Head back, he gazes, as they sing of love anew. Down in the woodlands the birds and flowers and soft wind All join together to make him blithe and gay; Down in the woodlands the little creeping creatures Wait in their warm homes to hear what he will say.

He is so pleased, so small, so full of wisdom,
How could they help but love to hear him call—
Love to hear his laughter, his little stumbling footsteps,
Down in the woodlands where the trees are slim and tall?

K. M. M. FORDHAM.

THE WOMAN IN THE HUT

By EDGAR WALLACE

Author of "Sanders of the River," "Bones," "The Keepers of the King's Peace," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN, A.R.A.

OT the holy carpet as it lies upon the black tomb of the Prophet; not the vestal virgins in their guarded cells; not any mystic thing or being of any tribe of people; none of these is, or was, more sacred than the tchu. This Sanders learnt on a morning following the visitation of such a divinity. Because she had put upon his forehead—he washed it off, and needed turpentine for the purpose—a mark which told all the world that he had been sealed to sacrifice, Sanders felt no reverence for the virgin, but he had a wholesome respect for her mistress, the Devil Woman of Limbi.

"Bit of a mystery, dear old Excellency."
Bones, constituting himself an impartial investigator, shook his head.

"Correct me if I'm wrong, dear old Ham,

but these are the facts."

He ticked them off on a bony forefinger, and he frowned horribly as an outward proof that he was devoting the whole of his brilliant intellect to the matter.

"At eleven, dear old Ham goes to bed, at which hour, I might remark, poor old

Bones was——"

"Fooling with the searchlight—we saw

you," interrupted Hamilton.

"Old Bones was alert an' watchin'," said Bones severely, "his jolly old eyes skinned and rovin'. But that's beside the question. At eleven Ham goes to bed. At twelve, excellent old Excellency follows, both being perfectly sober."

"Bones!" said the outraged Sanders.

"At four a young lady comes into room, paints two X's on Excellency's noble brow, and hops it."

"Your vulgarity, Bones, is deplorable,"

said Hamilton. "Well, what's the solution?"

"It's a mystery," said Bones safely.

"I will have no mysteries," said Sanders, "and I expect to find no mysteries here that I cannot solve."

Sanders was to discover such a mystery, and soon, but this he could not have known.

"I have been into the question of the tchu," said Hamilton, "and I've got them down fine. Stripped of all the superstitions which surround them, they are the messengers of the Old Woman. The people here insist that the girls must die before they become tchu, and that explains the death-mark on their foreheads. That they are mortal is proved by the fact that one got out of the country some years ago—at any rate, she disappeared. But tchu is sacred. The Old King destroyed a regiment of his guards because one of the soldiers slashed at tchu with a stick, seeing her running through the forest and thinking she was a frolicking girl."

"The tchu can wait," said Sanders, getting up from the table where they were breakfasting, "but Mofolobo cannot wait."

Mofolobo of the Fongini was a cunning and clever hunter, for he knew the ways of the forest, and of all beasts, and of some men. He had speared the elephant and the lion, the leopard and the quick little buffalo, to face whom is death. He had tracked all manner of beasts, wounded and unwounded, reading the story of their strength or fear or savageness from a broken twig here and a bloody leaf there; and where his eyes failed him, his broad nostrils served him well.

He ruled his clan and his village with

a rod of iron, and his house with whips. He had fourteen wives, who dug in his fields. Once he had fifteen, the fifteenth being a young girl who had been given him by the king. She was a woman of the Bubujala, accounted beautiful, and a dancer of great merit. A low estimate of her value was twenty goats, such a fortune having been offered for her by a little chief of the Bubujala.

But this fifteenth girl did not take her whippings kindly, and one night, when Mofolobo was sleeping in his great hut, his wife rose from his side, and, slipping a noose about his neck, she pulled with all her strength, having run the loose end through the wooden edge of the bed; and there might have been the end of Mofolobo and all his mysteries, but that the hide turned

traitor and broke.

The next morning Mofolobo had the tops of four tall trees cleared of their branches, and between them, clinging to the swaying trunks, his workmen built a platform, and upon this platform was strapped the fifteenth wife, with cords that did not break, and there she remained till shedied. The villagers heard her whimpering for six days, and on the seventh the vultures

Mofolobo had hunted men, and had kept upon their trail tirelessly, unswervingly, until in the end he had had his kill.

But Mofolobo had never been hunted until the day he flew from Rimi-Rimi. He realised the novelty of the situation by the unusual emotion which flooded and confused him, as he paddled in terrible haste up the river that borders the Fongini country.

So hard was the pace that one of the six paddlers collapsed from exhaustion. Mofolobo snatched his paddle, dropped the man over the side of the canoe, and took his place. At each bend and twist of the river Mofolobo would look back, expecting to see the white bow of a Government steamer coming round the further bend, and to hear the whistle and whine of bullets about his head.

He came to a landing at sunset, and threw himself upon the ground. His paddlers had not the strength to leave their canoe, but fell forward in their places, and might have drifted out and down the river, but Mofolobo recovered, gripped the canoe's nose, and aroused his men with his long whip.

The villagers at the landing-place had seen

his arrival, and came forward, trembling, to serve him. They swept a new hut and cooked food for him and his followers. But Mofolobo had no thought of staying the night. He went on alone, for none of his men were able to stand, and walked through the dark hours, contemptuous of the shadowy things that prowled in the wood and turned emerald-green eyes in his direction, and in the morning, when every muscle and nerve within him cried for sleep, he came to his own city, and people who saw him stride down the broad street, which his hut commanded from one end, folded their hands under their armpits, but did not speak to him.

Not even the women whose husbands he had taken to war, and who were now scattered in the forest of Rimi-Rimi-not one of these dare ask the fate of her man, for Mofolobo's keen whip whistled left

and right as he walked.

He strode into his hut, dropped his whip, and flung himself on his skin bed, and his principal wife came to him.

"Lord, will you eat?" she asked, but

he was asleep.

He woke as the shadows were lengthening, and sent for Gini-Gini, his own brother, and the one man he trusted. came into the big hut expectantly.
"O Mofolobo," he greeted, "I see you.

Where are all the soldiers of this city?

"In hell, I think," said Mofolobo indifferently, "for they are great runners, and it is said that slow men do not reach the devil place."

"What of the white man?" asked Gini-

Gini, and Mofolobo shivered.

"He is the meat of the Holy One, and that is what saved him. For on his face were two wonderful marks, such as the Old Woman makes upon her meat. Also "his voice quavered a moment—"there was tchu in the city before we came."

Now, the tchu, as all men know, are intimates of spirits and ghosts, and are the especial familiars of the Devil Woman of Limbi. There was a special reason why tchu should be dreadful to Mofolobo.

"O ko," said his shocked brother, "that was a bad palaver. But you, Mofolobo, who are so great a one, and who have studied mysteries so that you are as wise as the Old Woman herself, how is she terrible to you?"

And again Mofolobo shivered a d did

not reply.

His brother sat cross-legged on the bed.

He was a loquacious man and a great

gossip.

"Tchu I have never seen"—he shuddered conventionally—"but they must be terrible to witness. Some say that men go blind when they see them, and they are certainly very holy ones, being the spirits of the dead whom the Old Woman has killed. And they say that if you touch them, snakes come from your ears, and your blood drips slowly from your fingers, and you are cursed, and will one day shrivel and shrivel until you become a little fish."

The back of Mofolobo was turned to the talker. He had cast off the skin about his middle when he came in to sleep, and he was searching his discarded dress. Presently he found what he wanted, stuffed in a pocket on the inner side of the skin. It was a flat piece of wood bearing certain

black designs.

"This I brought from the city of Rimi-Rimi," he said, "being certain devil-marks which the white man has made; and perhaps it will bring me good fortune."

Gini-Gini looked curiously and uncomprehendingly at the signs on the wood.

"These are made with the burnt end of a stick," he said wisely. "I have never seen such magic before. If you keep this thing, Mofolobo, it will make you rich."
"So I think," said Mofolobo, and tucked

"So I think," said Mofolobo, and tucked away the wood into the pocket where he

had found it.

He lifted up the skin and seemed in some doubt. Then he cast off the cloth about his waist and put the skin in its place.

"This night I go into the forest, Gini-Gini," he said, "to learn new mysteries."

Gini-Gini moved uncomfortably, yet was in such awe of his brother that he did not give expression to his thoughts. It was while the chief was collecting his spears that Gini-Gini plucked up courage.

"O Mofolobo," he said, "what is this magic in the forest? For it seems you go there very often, and none see your

beautiful face for a moon."

"I have a powerful ju-ju," said Mofolobo.

"They say—" began the other, but lacked courage to finish.

"All frogs croak in the same tone," said Mofolobo contemptuously. "They say nothing to me, by death!"

Gini-Gini lowered his voice and came

nearer his kinsman.

"O Mofolobo," he said in a low tone, some men say that in the dark forest,

where the devils and the bushmen live, there is a great hut and a woman "—again he hesitated—" who is not of our colour, Mofolobo."

The other stared at him with a cold,

paralysing stare.

"O Gini-Gini," he said softly, "when they say, I do not hear. When you speak, I hear well. I love you, Gini-Gini, because you are the son of my own mother and father, and because you are my brother my arm does not go mad when you speak. But you will not speak again of this matter, Gini-Gini."

And the brother became a humble subject.

"Lord," he said, "I bury my words."
"That is good," said Mofolobo. "Now

we will eat."

It was dark when he started off on his solitary prowl through the forest, and he struck off at the city eastwards of the village, which, as all men know, leads to nowhere but the forest of ghosts, and Gini-Gini went with him to the edge of the wood.

Now, the people of his village hated their chief and tyrant with hatred of impotent hands and bitter hearts, and they spat secretly after him when they saw him pass, and the women whose husbands had gone beyond view cursed him righteously, though it is true that many of them never desired to see their husbands again.

And when they had cursed him, they came and walked under the dilapidated platform between the four trees, and stepped over the bones that the wind had blown to the ground, and their hatred was fortified.

None hated him worse than Milini, his own favourite wife, who, could he but read her heart, would have shared the fate of the fifteenth wife. And because he favoured her, he had, in the days of his loving, taught her many curious arts of woodcraft. He had trained her to walk a trail so that not even the leaves beneath her feet would creak or crackle under her, and he had taught her to walk with a certain sideway motion that made her walk more noiseless; and all these things she stored in her memory.

When Mofolobo left his kraal and crossed with his brother to the edge of the great forest, Milini stole silently behind him; and when she saw the two brothers stop to talk at the beginning of the wood, she crouched down behind a tree, and was there when Gini-Gini came back, chanting the invocation to ghosts, which men are not

ashamed to use on dark nights and in lonely places.

She waited until he was out of sight, then rose and went swiftly, but noiselessly, on the track of her husband. He, for his part, made no attempt at quiet. Instinctively he stepped lightly, but he did not go out of his way to adopt the "secret walk" he had taught his wife. She heard him muttering and chanting as he went, and once he stopped and threw out his arms toward a dead tree which the lightning had blasted.

"O M'shimba M'shamba," she heard him say, "tell me your magic, for I am very wise, and soon shall be wiser than the Old Woman, the devil. And one day I will sit in her wonderful cave and rule the

world."

In spite of herself, Milini shuddered at these dreadful words, for was not Mofolobo setting himself up as a god? She drew in her breath quickly at the awfulness of his presumption.

"O ghosts who live in this wood," he went on, "and because of your fearful presence no man dare walk, see me, Mofolobo, who has many magical thoughts."

It was true, as he said, that none walked in this wood because of the spirits; nor, it was commonly believed, did any animals live here, or birds, or even the little white-whiskered monkeys. Mofolobo did not fear devils, nor, for the matter of that, did Milini, his wife, though she feared her husband, and every time he paused in his walk, she dropped her hand on the razor-edged hunting-knife which she had been sharpening for two years.

He had not far to go. The reputation which the forest enjoyed, no less than his own reputation, ensured him freedom from the observations of the curious. He struck off at right angles to the path, and she heard the swish of the bushes as he passed through

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m them}$

She followed more cautiously, worming her way along the ground under the bushes as he had taught her, and came again within view of him as he was mounting a little hillock. It was a patch in the midst of the forest, free from trees.

Moreover, she had a skyline, and could see the edge of a hut set upon the slope of the hill, and it was to this hut that

Mofolobo was going.

She approached the hut cautiously and she thought she heard the rattle of iron. A second later she was sure. She knew that sound and all that it signified. It was a favourite practice of Mofolobo to hold a prisoner with a long steel shackle which allowed him to move a dozen paces and no further. She saw him stoop and pick up the chain, which was fastened to a stake outside the hut, and gather the loose links in his hand. Then he dropped them with a crash and walked in through the door.

Milini waited for an hour, not daring to cross the clearing, where she would be easily seen. But she learnt many things, and at last, satisfied, she went back along the forest path and came to her hut.

Hers was the best of all the huts. Grass mats hung upon the wall, and there was the skin of a leopard for her feet to rest upon, and a fine bed. Into this bed she turned, and was asleep when Mofolobo came in. At first she was in a flurry of fear, for she thought that Mofolobo had known she had followed him, since it was not usual for him to come back so soon after he had been to the forest to practise his mysteries.

"Lord, lord," she stammered, "do you

need me?"

"Woman, get me warm cloth such as women wear," he said, and kicked the fire in the centre of the hut to a blaze.

She saw that he was agitated beyond the ordinary, and hurried to do his bidding, collecting such strips of cloth as she could find.

When she had given these to him and he had put them under his arm, she watched him go out of the village, peering round the edge of her door, and knew that he had taken the clothes to the woman who was in the forest.

Just as the day dawned somebody else came into her hut, and she sprang up in terror, gathering her cloth about her, for this man's face was the face of a white man; and, looking over his shoulder, she saw soldiers carrying guns.

"O woman," said Sanders, "I seek Mofolobo, and they tell me he sleeps in

your hut."

"Not in my hut this night, lord," she said, taking courage, for he neither whipped her nor put his fingers in her eyes, as, according to tradition, white men did. "I think Mofolobo has a better hut than mine."

Sanders did not understand her.

"With what wife shall I find him?" he asked.

"Lord, he is with no wife," said a trembling voice at his elbow, "but is

gone to practise this great magic in the forest."

It was Gini-Gini, the brother, aroused by the advent of the soldiers, and in a sweat to plead the cause of his father's son.

"I have heard of this magic," said Sanders, and his words had an acrid flavour, "and because of this magic have I come in my ship to the shore and on my feet through this forest, for I desired to make a palaver with Mofolobo."

"Lord, he is not here," said Gini-Gini.
"But I will tell the beater of the village

drum to make a sound for him."

"That you will not do," said Sanders, "for the beater of your village drum is being beaten by my soldiers, having attempted to send an alarm into this village."

Then he saw something in the woman's face, a light in her eyes, a blazing eagerness, and caught the swift look she threw to

Gini-Gini.

"For you, man," said Sanders, turning to the brother, "this palaver is finished. Go to your hut."

"But, lord---"

Sanders raised his stick, and Gini-Gini did not wait, but went out of the hut, his body curved forward as though he feared for that part on which the stick promised to fall.

"Now, woman," said Sanders, "speak quickly and speak truly, for I am hot for

MOIOIODO.

"Lord, he is truly in the forest," said the woman Milini, his wife, "doing certain things."

"O ko," said Sanders ironically.

"Lord, it is no magic he makes, Mofolobo, my husband, though it is said he is a great magician. I know he is very cruel."

She led Sanders from the hut and pointed to the platform and the four high trees; and Sanders, who had seen such things before, nodded. Then a horrible thought occurred to him.

"Tell me, woman," he said huskily,

"what manner of person is this?"

"Lord, there is none at all save bones," said the woman. "She was Mofolobo's wife."

"A woman of your people?" asked Sanders, scarcely above a whisper. And when Milini nodded, he drew a long breath. He asked her her name, and she told him.

"Now, Milini," he said kindly, "you shall speak to me, and I shall be strong for you against Mofolobo and all manner of people."

"Then I will tell you, lord. Mofolobo is a dog," she said passionately, and told Sanders certain things, to which Sanders listened with a little grimace of pain.

"Now, I am sorry for you, Milini," he said. "Tell me now of the magic in the

forest."

"Lord, there is no magic," she said. "But this man has a hut, and in that hut is a woman, chained by the leg, and to her he goes."

Sanders's face was white and drawn.

"How long has this woman been there?" he said, and his voice sounded strange in his own ears.

"For many moons, I think," said Milini, "for all that time has Mofolobo gone to her, though I did not know of the hut till this night. Lord, I remember," she said suddenly. "It was when he came back from the Old King's city. There had been a great palaver, and Mofolobo and many others chopped a certain god-man—"

Sanders sat down on a stool and covered his face with his hands and groaned, and the woman looked down at him in amazement. Presently he looked up, and his face

was the face of an old man.

"Tell me, Milini, is this woman—alive?"
Milini nodded. "Lord, she is alive," she
said, "for I heard her scream."

Sanders got up and hitched his belt. He took out his long-barrelled automatic and slipped back the jacket. Then he pulled out two black magazines and looked at these also, and the woman watched the proceedings with interest.

"You shall lead me to this place, Milini, where your husband is," he said wearily.

"Lord, I hate this man," she said, and her bosom rose and fell with the intensity of her hate.

"Soon he will be too dead for hate," said Sanders. "Come."

She went out and led the way. Sanders and six of his soldiers walked behind, the rest being left in the village; and she led them unerringly, though no path was visible, on the long way she had trodden the night before, and once, when she stopped and looked back, thinking that she walked too fast for the white man, he was at her heels, and said, "Go on!"

They came in course of time to the bushes where Mofolobo had turned off, and Sanders saw how well the place had been chosen, for it seemed that they were still in the midst of the thick forest.

She went through the bushes, Sanders

behind her, and along by a little stream, and then unexpectedly they came to open ground. There was the little hillock and the square hut.

"You have done your part," said Sanders. "Now, I tell you, Milini, that this night you shall put dust upon your body and green leaves about your waist, and you shall

dance the Dance of the Gone."

"Lord," she said, "I have never danced with such gladness as I shall dance to-night. But why do you hate Mofolobo, whom you do not know, and who has not beaten you. or done any of those things of which I told you?"

Sanders did not explain. He could not tell of the missionary and his daughter, or of Mofolobo, who ran into the bushes and came out wiping his spears, that none of his people should suspect the capture he had

"These things are magic, woman," he

said, and looked round.

He had not come alone with his soldiers. The headman and certain of the villagers had followed in the wake of the party, and now stood grouped at the opening of the woods. These carried no arms. insatiable curiosity of the natives had led them, and Sanders had no thought to send them back, for he wanted all men to see the punishment.

He crossed to the foot of the hill and went up quickly, his barefooted soldiers, their rifles at the ready, flanking him left and right. The door of the hut was closed. He saw the end of the chain passing beneath It was strange that there should be a door at all, but the maker had constructed a rough screen of plaited straw which hung

on hinges of skin.

Mofolobo had neither seen nor heard, and he was talking. Sanders waited an instant

at the door to listen.

"Woman, you shall tell me more," said Mofolobo, "for did I not get you warm cloth because of the cold and the gurgles in your breast? You shall tell me of the magic of your people--"

Sanders lifted his foot and kicked open

the door.

"Come out, Mofolobo!" he said in a

cracked voice.

He heard a scuffle and the clank of spearhandles as they were gathered together. Then Mofolobo leapt out into the open, his shield raised, his spear poised. For a second he glared into Sanders's eyes, and then Sanders shot him dead.

The body sprawled at his feet, but still he stood hesitating to enter the hut. And then, with an effort that made the perspiration pour from his temples, he crossed the

threshold and stopped.

There was a woman sitting on a bed. A broad link of the chain was about her ankle, and she did not look up, for she was swaying and shaking with a fit of coughing, and, despite the warm cloth about her shoulders, she was shivering as with an ague.

Sanders stood spell-bound, for this girl was black, and obviously negroid. Presently she looked round slowly at the Adminis-

"O man," she said feebly, "I am very sick, and Mofolobo has left me here for a moon, and I am now nearly starved."

" Woman, who are you?"

"Lord, he took me," she said listlessly, "to learn all the mysteries of the Old Woman.''

She walked slowly toward him. Sanders backed through the door. The group which he had left at the bottom of the hill were now standing about the body of Mofolobo, and they turned as the woman came out. One look they gave her, and then, with a yell, the men and the leader alike fell flat upon their faces. Sanders gripped the nearest man and pulled him up.
"Speak, fool!" he said roughly. "Why

do you fall at the sight of a girl ? "

"Lord," muttered the man—it was Gini-Gini, and he had forgotten the existence of his brother—"this woman is tchu-tchu!"

Sanders looked round in astonishment. He saw the marks on the woman's forehead —the same marks as he had seen on her who had come to him one night and had marked him for death.

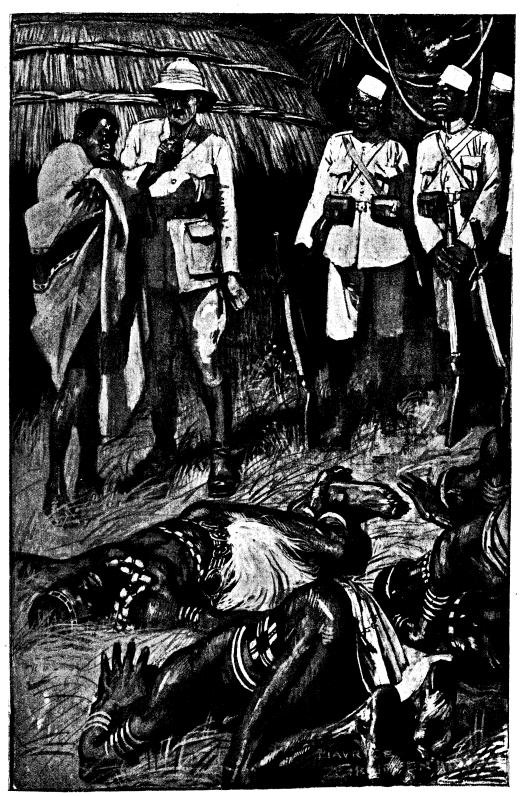
"Lord, that is true," said the tchu, "for I was a mystery who carried the word of the Old One, and men feared me—all men save Mofolobo, who seized me on the night that Fergisi was chopped, that I might tell him. the mysteries. For, lord, this Mofolobo desired to sit in the cave of the Old Woman and be a god.''

Sanders looked down at the dead man,

and drew a long, sobbing sigh.

"O Mofolobo," he said, "now by all the rules of these people you deserved your death, and by my rules also do you deserve death, for you came up against me with Kofolaba, yet I would not kill you now!"

"Lord, this man deserved death many times," quavered one of the spectators, "for it is very terrible for any man to look



"With a yell, the men and the leader alike fell flat upon their faces."

at the tchu, and he has touched her and beaten her, I think."

They sent back to the village to get a man to release the girl from the clasp about her ankle, and Sanders had time to discover many things about Mofolobo.

"This man had certain white magic also," said the woman, and she took gingerly from beneath her bed a flat piece of wood and dropped it on the fire, dusting her hands.

"What magic was that, O woman?"

asked Sanders, with a smile.

His relief was greater than he knew. "It was white magic, lord," said the woman, "being wood with certain devil-marks which white men had made. Mofolobo brought it from the city of the Old King."

" Devil-marks?"

He stooped and picked the shaving of wood from the fire It was already blackened and scorched, but in some places the writing was discernible, and in one place he was able to see that the letters had been written with a blackened stick.

He carried the wood to the light and read, and, as he read, the room seemed to spin round.

S NDE.,

. . IANA ..R.USON TER.I.L. DANGER ...AVE YOUAN OF LIMBI MIT. SA.RI...

DAY OF LOOKING.

Diana Ferguson was alive! The letter must have been written within the past seven days.

" Lord," said the girl, who was looking at

him curiously, "is that, too, a mystery?"
"Woman," said Sanders, breathing hard and pocketing the still warm wood, "it is the greatest of all the mysteries."

The seventh story in this series will appear in the next number.



SUMMER DAYS.

AT last the warm days follow on the rain, And the clogged flowers that drooped above the earth Lift up their faces to the sun with mirth, Colour and perfume in their hearts again. Petty anxieties desert the brain, Leaving it clear and calm, ripe for the birth Of larger hopes, that fill the Winter's dearth With human gold and spiritual grain.

These are the days of lovers, when the strange Call of the cuckoo from the woodland lures Heart unto heart, and bright adventure stirs The schoolboy soul to Southern dreams that range To piracy; for Nature now endures Naught that is civilised—all must be hers!

RICHARD CHURCH.

FISHER FOR FOURPENCE

By RONALD M. NEWMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY H. R. MILLAR

TILLYCON is a peculiar sort of fellow who is constantly evolving peculiar ideas. The ideas, unfortunately, are not very valuable. Jillycon has never discovered a safe method of avoiding the payment of income-tax, of travelling on railways without a ticket, or any other such thing which would prove of assistance to the community at large, but he really does get some queer notions out of that big head of his.

The other morning, for instance, I encountered him ambling gently along the road, attached to a small dog of the Pekinese variety.

"Cheero, Jillycon!" I said. "Where

did you find that?"

Jillycon's eyes turned down on the small

struggling, wheezing reptile.

"I didn't," he said. "My wife did. She paid twenty pounds for it. But I've just been thinking"—I sympathised—"I've just been thinking of a rather interesting point."

"How best to get rid of Fido without arousing your wife's suspicions?"

hazarded.

"Certainly not," said Jillycon. occurred to me ten minutes ago what a very difficult thing it would be to borrow fourpence from a friend."

"With a cunning, evil face like yours," said I, "yes. But I-I could borrow several fourpences. It would be simplicity itself.

Where's the catch in it?"

"There isn't a catch," replied Jillycon. "What I mean is this: I'm quite sure that if you set out to borrow fourpence in a given time from friends, you, being limited to merely requesting the loan, and disqualified every time you receive an advance or an offer of an advance of more than fourpence, you would not succeed."

I repeated it through slowly, and then

sunlight dispersed the mist which had

enshrouded my grey matter.

"You mean," I said, "that if I can only go up to a friend and just say, 'Old egg, lend us fourpence,' and if he says, 'Right!' and pushes over a tanner—well, that's what you mean. Everyone I ask will be sure to offer me more than fourpence, and then I'll have to try elsewhere—the limit being that I can't explain anything to them—just ask for fourpence. That it?"

"I think you understand," said Jillycon. "I am sure you would not succeed in, say,

"I bet I would," said I. "Some mug would dob up the exact amount—a Scotsman, for instance. Will you wager, Jillycon?"

Jillycon pondered.

"If you promise to abide by the exact conditions," he said, "I am willing to bet you an even pound that you won't succeed in one hour.

"Done!" said I. "I'll start now. I'll lurk around in these familiar places and dun everyone I know for fourpence. You'll take my word for it, if I succeed?"

Jillycon considered that.

"Yes," he said. "Oh, yes. I'll meet you here in one hour," And he ambled off, dog in tow, leaving me to my own devices.

Business commenced at once. Down the road I spied young Jerry Little, heading straight towards me. I accosted him.
"Morning, Jerry," said I. "Lend me fourpence, will you?"

The immaculate and impudent young rascal grinned. "So it's come to this, has it?" he said, shaking his head sadly. "Begging in the streets! Dear, dear! The inevitable end of all gamblers and drunkards."

"Don't be a fool," I said. "I-er-I've

come out without my money. Lend me

fourpence."

Jerry fished in his pockets. "It's a big risk," he said. "But there! Here's a bob, my little man. Go and buy yourself some sweeties." And, laughing unnecessarily, he dropped a shilling into my hand and swung off down the road.

I swore rapidly and neatly, as befitted the occasion, and walked along in the direction of the shops. I walked rapidly, since the time limit was not a lengthy one, and the possibilities of my failing to encounter suitable acquaintances were big. In ten minutes, however, my heart commenced knocking, and I changed down into second gear. Before a grocery establishment, engaged in animated conversation with another lady, was Mrs. Bingle, a neighbour of ours. I bided my opportunity, and then slid up to her.

"Good morning, Mrs. Bingle," I said, in the most charming manner possible. "I'm so sorry to trouble you, but—er—the fact is, I've run out of money, and-er-shopping, you know—I wonder if you'd mind lending

me fourpence?"

"Why, of course," said Mrs. Bingle. often do that sort of thing myself." fumbled in her bag. "Will a ten-shilling note be enough? I have plenty with me.

The grateful smile I gave her was a master-

piece of concealment.

"I only require-" I murmured.

"Don't be silly," she said, thrusting a young Fisher of commodities into my hand. "You're sure to need it. Isn't it a lovely morning? How's your garden looking?

Good-bye."

Eleven shillings richer in pocket, but poorer in spirit, I moved on. I began to appreciate the difficulty of Jillycon's problem. Fourpence was such an absurd amount. Now, if it had been five bob . . . I spied Balding across the road, and sprinted after him.

"Balding, you old sinner," I cried cheerfully, "lend me fourpence, will you?"-

and I lied the usual explanation.

"With pleasure," said Balding. "I'm cleaned out myself—haven't a sou. Just going to the bank. Stroll down with me, and

you can have what you want."

I excused myself. It was absurd. It was annoying. My credit was too good. I never realised before that generosity was so rampant amongst my acquaintances. pottered mournfully about, somewhat afraid that I might acquire a bad name for myself by persistent borrowing. Then I saw McPherson coming out of a tobacconist's Here, thought I, was my great chance. A Scotsman! It would be even as I had prophesied to Jillycon.

"Hail, McPherson!" I called out gladly. "Well met! You're just the man. Would

you mind lending me fourpence?"

McPherson eyed me steadily, then his hand moved slowly towards his trousers pocket. He produced a handful of change. He fingered it over carefully, whilst my eyes bulged. He extracted coppers.

"A've not got fourpence," he said, " but here's threepence-ha'penny. Ye're quite

welcome."

I faded away—fed up and thoroughly annoyed. The time was slipping on—only a quarter of an hour remained. I paced up and down the street, eyeing all those whom I encountered. I saw Dolly Winter, who, in our neighbourhood, is regarded as a sort of second cousin to Mary Pickford, but I couldn't swallow sufficient pride and conceit to broach her on such a delicate matter.

At last five minutes alone remained, and then I spotted coming towards me Peggy, my wife, and Tootles, our five-year-old. I didn't welcome them very enthusiastically.

"Hallo, John!" said Peggy. "What are you up to now? I've been looking everywhere for you. You promised to paint the bath this morning."

"I've been busy," said I. "You going

shopping?"

"Just taking Tootles out," said Peggy.

"He wants to buy sweets."

"Look what I've got, Daddy!" bawled Tootles, extending a small clenched fist.

"Mummie gave them me."

I gazed down as my small son revealed his treasure. Then I started violently. Tootles had got four pennies—new ones! I was not slow to realise my opportunity. I stooped down and spoke rapidly.

"Tootles," I said, "will you lend Daddy fourpence?"

" Why?" demanded Tootles, closing his hand tightly.

"Because Daddy wants it," said I.

"Oh, come on, John!" said Peggy. "It's

getting near lunch-time."

"Wait a minute!" I implored. Then: "Tootles," I resumed, "Daddy wants four pennies very badly. Daddy hasn't got any money. Poor Daddy!"—and I commenced

a realistic, heartrending whimper.

Tootles yelled with delight. "Ha, ha,

ha!" he chuckled. "Funny Daddy!"

"I mean it," I put in hastily. "Daddy wants fourpence ever such a lot. Please lend it me, Tootles. Daddy'll give you the pennies back again."

"Soon?" said Tootles.

"Yes, yes," I said, looking at my watch.

My small son looked up, hesitated, hesitated again, and then very solemnly presented me with his four beloved pennies. I produced my watch. I'd won—won by a minute!

Then Tootles suddenly repented. His



"'Tootles,' I said, 'will you lend Daddy fourpence?'"

"Very soon, old boy. In a few minutes. Please lend me fourpence, Tootles."

"John," protested Peggy, "are you

mad?"

"I shall be very soon," said I. "Tootles . . . "I pleaded hard.

loss was too great. His sacrifice had been a big one. He broke into a deafening vell.

ing yell. "Boo, boo! Give me them back, Daddy!

I want my pennies!"

"Yes, yes, you shall have them," I

assured him hastily. "Don't cry, Tootles. You shall have them back."

I gazed round me, feeling an awful brute. Then I suddenly spotted old Jillycon heading down the road in the direction of our appointed meeting-place. I hailed him

triumphantly, and, as he pulled up, I stooped down again to Tootles.

"There, there!" I said. "Nice kind Tootles to help Daddy. You come along now. Er—Mr. Jillycon is going to buy you a nice big lot of sweets!"



AT PIXIE CORNER.

AT Pixie Corner, when 'twas eve, I saw a horseman riding by, A golden falcon on his sleeve, His silver helmet 'gainst the sky. "Oh, wait a moment, sir, I pray!" But like a flash he rode away.

And then I saw—so small and neat—A pixie lady clad in brown,
With coloured shoes upon her feet,
And on her head a hawthorn crown.
"Oh, stay a moment, lady, do!"
But in a flash she vanished, too.

And twenty goblin men appeared, With pixie sacks as black as night; Each drew a grey hair from his beard And tied his sack up tight as tight; But when I moved, they cried "Alas!" And faded through the meadow grass.

And there was bugling loud and strong, And fluttering as of fairy wands: A tall proud Princess walked along, With lanterns hanging from her hands, And through the blowing thistledowns I saw the lights of fairy towns.

"Oh, Princess, one short moment stay!"
I gave a glad and joyous shout;
But like a flash she fled away,
And all the fairy lights went out . . .
And I was left alone to grieve,
At Pixie Corner when 'twas eve.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

RICHARD'S DANCING LESSONS

By J. LINCOLN TREGENZA

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WALLIS MILLS

ICK LESTER pounced upon the tiny lace-edged handkerchief and hastened along Church Street, Kensington, in pursuit of the girl who had just dropped it. The afternoon sun was at that moment playing the most delightful tricks upon the copper-bronze curls which peeped from beneath her hat-brim, and Dick, when almost within speaking distance, shortened his stride in order to enjoy so pleasant a spectacle for a few moments longer before surrendering his find.

Suddenly, however, the owner turned sharply to the left and disappeared through

the side entrance of a music shop.

Dick halted at the doorway, his attention arrested by a neat brass plate inscribed thus—

MISS LESLIE GORDON, Private Dancing Lessons.

1st Floor.

The announcement interested him: not that he needed lessons—on the contrary, being a performer of exceptional skill, he could well have given instruction in the art himself-but because dancing in all its forms intrigued him. Moreover, the name "Leslie Gordon" had, he felt, a certain attraction-vaguely he connected it with the lady of the lost handkerchief-and it was with quickening interest that he espied a diminutive "L.G." embroidered in a corner of the cambric square. He was, he decided, something of a detective! The idea pleased him, and, imbued with a sensation of adventure, he crossed the threshold and ascended a narrow stairway leading to the first floor. Reaching the landing, he paused. At right angles to the stairhead was an open doorway, the interior of the room beyond being obscured from view by a pair of heavy green velvet curtains. As he waited irresolutely, someone

from within essayed a few bars of a waltz upon a tuneless piano, breaking off suddenly into a succession of chords.

"Listen, Leslie!" came a voice. "Isn't

it wicked ? "

There was a short pause; then came the answer, spoken in a low-pitched, sweetly vibrant voice—

"We'll ask them to tune it when we pay for the hire, darling. How much money have we left?"

"Just enough for the rent of the room,

due the day after to-morrow," "We must pay that, Eva."

"Yes, we must pay that."

"I wish—I wish we could make people have lessons. Do you realise that we've only had three men and that horrid fat woman since we started—just six weeks ago?"

"Only two men, because the one with the large feet forgot to sign the cheque he

gave us."

"Men are beastly!"

"I think he really forgot."

"I hated him! He breathed on me."
This criticism seemed final, for it elicited no response. After a brief silence the speaker continued—

"Eva, it's horrible to say it, but I-I'm

afraid we shall have to give up."

"Unless something happens," admitted the other sadly.

"Nothing ever happens—at least, only things you loathe."

" Like having to give up."

"Yes, I loathe that."

Richard, who had been an unwilling listener to this dialogue, now quietly descended the stairs, fully resolved upon his course of action. Although by no means a rapid thinker, he had, during the past few minutes, arrived at a definite conclusion: he intended, if possible, to help things along.

Having, therefore, stealthily descended the stairs, he immediately turned and noisily reascended them. Boldly brushing aside the curtains, he strode into the apartment—a detective no longer: an actor now-an actor taking the stage. . . . It is barely furnished; a shabby piano R. and a low cretonne-covered settee L. complete the setting. Upon the latter are discovered two girls—Miss Eva Hume and Miss Leslie The former is fair, pretty in an uninteresting way, short, and inclined to plumpness. Miss Gordon is slightly built, graceful in every movement, and dangerously attractive. Her eyes are reminiscent of a stormy, sun-kissed sea; her hair, which curls almost boyishly around a small, well-shapen head, has the warm tint of burnished copper. Red lips, a delicately pointed chin, and cheeks aglow with the bloom of youth, lead one to assume that she is intended to star the small cast. But Dick is speaking. . . .

"I say, you know, excuse me butting in, but I saw you drop this just now, so I picked it up and crashed after you." And he extended the handkerchief towards the

owner.

Leslie rose and accepted it. "How extremely kind of you!" It was a simple speech, yet the smile which accompanied it suscitated in Dick a sudden delightful sensa-

tion of beneficence.

"Oh, not a bit!" he protested. "Awfully pleased I happened to see it." He blushed, and continued guilefully: "As a matter of fact, it's jolly lucky for me that I rolled in here, you know, because I'm awfully keen to have some dancing lessons-private ones, you understand, and lots of 'em, because I'm such a duffer!"

Leslie glanced at her partner. Had this big, blue-eyed, healthy-looking person

dropped down from heaven?
"You see," he rattled on, "when I spotted the name on the board downstairs and the initials on the handkerchief, I thought to myself that here was a chance to kill two birds with one jolly old stone."

"It certainly seems an excellent idea," agreed Leslie, successfully repressing a

"Yes, didn't it—I mean, doesn't it? I say," he pursued anxiously, "you are Miss Gordon, aren't you? And you'll give me some dancing lessons, won't you?"

"I shall be very pleased to teach you," admitted Leslie honestly. "Yes, I'm Leslie Gordon. This is my partner, Miss Hume.

Eva, dear, we aren't frightfully busy just now, are we?"

Miss Hume consulted a small book

entirely devoid of entries.

"I think," she conceded graciously, "that we could manage a few more bookings.''

"Oh, splendid!" cried the actor. "Well, I must have a course, you know. You see. I don't know the first thing about dancingabsolutely a frightful duffer." He fumbled in his pocket. "Look here! I'll make you out a cheque for ten pounds in advance always pay in advance, on principle, you know-sound thing, principle! can't go wrong."

"Oh, but ten pounds is much too much," protested Leslie. "Five would be far better.

I think."

But Dick was sprawling across the piano top, already busy with fountain pen and

"Oh, nonsense—I beg your pardon—I mean what awful rot, you know! Ten isn't really half enough, because I shall want dozens of lessons. There!"—signing "Lester's my name—Dick the cheque. Lester. I'll leave this to dry on the jolly old piano. I say, may I come for a push round to-morrow at about three? "

"Will that be all right, Eva?"

" Perfectly."

"Top-hole! I'll be round at three, then. Well, au revoir, and thanks awfully." Glancing at his wrist-watch, he gave expression to a sound indicative of a forgotten appointment, and effected a hurried exit, well satisfied with the events of the after-

Having once embarked upon the dark and mysterious waters of deception, Dick was determined to steer clear of any hidden rocks; and therefore, within the security of his bedroom that night, with a chair as his partner, he assiduously practised the art of how not to dance. To and fro he ambled awkwardly, cultivating the stiffkneed, wooden style of movement which he knew to be so prevalent amongst beginners. Such painstaking efforts were not to go unrewarded, for, upon the morrow, the first lesson passed off without a hitch. For a full hour Miss Gordon instructed the willing, though seemingly somewhat stupid, pupil in the rudiments of ballroom dancing. Music, when required, was extracted from the badly-tuned piano by Miss Hume, who, in addition, further assisted her colleague by demonstrating to Dick certain technical faults of motion which he had the night

before so cunningly perfected.

In Miss Gordon's opinion dancers could be divided into three classes—those born,

lesson had finished, she was careful not to damp his apparent ardour by unduly candid criticism.

"You must practise hard," she insisted,



""Oh, not a bit,' he protested. "Awfully pleased I happened to see it."

those made, and those who merely move about the floor whilst dance music is being rendered. Secretly she relegated her new pupil to this last category, but when the "and concentrate upon what I've told you. Now, what must you remember for the next time?"

"Keep my shoulders steady, don't look

at my feet, and hold you more tightly,"

answered Dick promptly.

"Hold your partner a trifle more firmly," she corrected, "for control of direction, you understand."

"Of course, yes," he agreed. steering, as it were."

She smiled at him. "Yes, that's the idea. Well, good afternoon, Mr. Lester."

"Au revoir!" He took her extended hand, wishing that he could think of something else to say-something easy and conversational. "I've enjoyed the lesson awfully," he added at length, releasing the firm little hand. "I—I'm jolly glad you dropped that handkerchief!"

"It seems," remarked Miss Hume a few weeks later, "as though Mr. Lester has brought us luck. How many have we on the books, darling?"

"Nine! And all but three simply hopeless—they'll need dozens of lessons. Isn't

it ripping?"

Miss Hume agreed that it was indeed ripping. Then, after a pause, she asked— Do you like him, Leslie?"

"Like whom, dear?"

" Mr. Lester.

"Oh, Dick! Yes, he's nice. I like him." She turned away to the piano. "Shall we

try that new music over?"

And the weeks drifted by very pleasantly for Dick. He made but slow progress with his dancing, however, and it really seemed that another course would be necessary before anything approaching proficiency could be claimed. He was, in fact, seriously considering the advisability of suggesting this to Leslie, when one day, without even the shadow of a warning, a bombshell exploded upon his breakfast table. It arrived in the form of a briefly penned note reading as follows :--

DEAR MR. LESTER,

I was having tea in the gallery of The Rocco yesterday, and saw you downstairs dancing. As it is quite evident that you have been amusing yourself at my expense by coming to me for lessons, I now enclose my cheque for ten pounds.

Yours truly,

L. Gordon.

Dick groaned in the spirit. Was there ever, he wondered, such sheer, unadulterated Miserably he reviewed the bad luck? events of the preceding afternoon. He had drifted into The Rocco There he had met

Hughie Thornton, who was having tea with the little dark girl starring in "Fares Up." Hughie, like a prize fool, had introduced him as "one of the best dancers in Town," and the dark girl had insisted upon dancing with him. They had functioned twice, putting in-so Hughie had saidsome very stout work. And Leslie had watched! Well, it was all hopeless now. He had deceived her, and she would never forgive him. How could he tell her the truth? How could he say, "I knew you were hard up, so I thought I'd give you ten pounds"? It was absurd. How could he say a thing like that to a girl like Leslie? With some girls it might be possible, but not with Leslie. Leslie was different, very different—about as different as it was possible for a girl to be. For a long while he pondered; then suddenly there flashed into his mind an idea which seemed so brilliant and daring and yet so simple that he laughed aloud in appreciation of his own cleverness. Taking pen, ink, and paper, he composed a letter which, after much revision, eventually took the following form :---

My DEAR MISS GORDON,

You have made the same mistake as so many have done-mixing me up with my young brother Tom, I mean. Rocco is one of old Tom's favourite haunts, and he is, as you saw, pretty useful on his I can cuite understand how you mixed him up with me—rather funny, isn't it? As everything is now satisfactorily explained, I am returning your cheque, and shall turn up for my lesson as usual.

> Yours very sincerely, DICK LESTER.

This was, he considered, something of a masterpiece—the little bit about "old Tom's favourite haunt" had an almost uncanny ring of truth. The name "Tom" in itself was a stroke of genius. A less clever chap might, for instance, have said "Henry," which would have been absurd, brothers called Henry being practically always elderly married coves with children. So for a time he reasoned; but later, when his letter had passed into the clutches of postal officials, his contented optimism began to evaporate with alarming rapidity. A psychological storm arose, tossed him hither and thither, and finally left him shipwrecked upon the rocks of disillusionment.

"A masterpiece, indeed!" he reflected

bitterly. It was the letter of a fool—a fool and a liar. Leslie would despise and loathe him when she read it. He doubted whether she would even deign to reply. The cheque would probably come back with no comment

By return of post, however, her reply arrived-also the cheque. The note was brief, crisply worded, and to the point.

DEAR MR. LESTER (it ran),

I don't believe you have a brother. If you have, bring him to see me, and I will apologise. L. Gordon.

It was just the kind of letter, he reflected sadly, that made a chap feel that he'd put up a very bad show. Well, so he had. After all, he'd told her a deliberate lie, and she knew it. No decent girl would stand for that—Leslie least of all. What, he wondered, would she say when he told her the truth? Would she understand that he'd only tried to help things along? Would she forgive One thing was certain—he would have to go straight to her now and explain exactly how the thing had started.

And so that afternoon, torn between hopes and fears, he peeped through the

curtains of the dancing-room.

Leslie was there alone, standing by the piano, idly turning over some music. She glanced round as he entered.

"Well," she asked coldly, "have you brought your brother? Please don't keep

him waiting outside."

This opening was disconcerting to Dick, who came forward, clearing his throat nervously.

"Tom's not here," he began weakly---

"hasn't come along, you know."

"Oh, really?"

Dick shivered. "Er—no. Not to-day. As a matter of fact, he—that is, I—have in a sense rather misled you about Tom."

"Surely not, Mr. Lester."

Again he shivered, then continued miserably-

"What I mean to say is, you know, that I haven't actually got a brother."

There was a short but terrible silence.

"Then why," inquired Leslie at length, " did you say that you had?"

" Why did I?" he repeated unhappily.

"Yes, why did you?"

"Well, why on earth did 1?" demanded Dick wretchedly, frowning darkly at the floor.

Leslie rose. "It seems to me," she remarked clearly, "that you have been merely amusing yourself at my expense. If you have any explanation to offer, I will listen. If not, I think you had better go, as I—I'm rather busy this afternoon."

" But I must explain. You see, I invented Tom because I didn't want you to know that I could really dance fairly decently."

"So I gathered. But why should you, in the first place, have wished to conceal the fact that you are one of the best dancers in Town?"

Dick shifted uneasily on his feet.

"So that you could give me lessons," he ${f volunteered}$.

She regarded him in frank amazement. Was this man normal? she wondered. "Yes,

but why?"

It was all coming out now, he thought. Nothing could stop it. Taking a long breath, he commenced speaking as rapidly as he could find words.

"That day when I found your handkerchief," he began, "I followed you up here and waited a bit outside, not liking to butt in, you know. Well, I couldn't help hearing what you said about—about the jolly old coffers being a bit lowish, and I thought it would be a fairly bright kind of idea if I crashed in for a lesson or two just to cheer things along. I had to pretend that I was a beginner, so that I could weigh in a few shekels in a bunch for a course of lessons. I—I think that's all I can tell you, except that I'm frightfully sorry about it. I hate you to think I put up a rotten show. I didn't mean to. I thought I was rather bright at the time—just shows, you know."

There was a long silence. Dick looked at the floor, and Leslie looked at Dick. Had he glanced up, he would have seen in her eyes an expression that no man had ever seen there. Presently she spoke, very

quietly---

"And the people who have come to me for lessons recently—are they—did you—"

"Oh, they're really bad dancers. I just mentioned casually to a few people that you were jolly good at teaching, and they rolled along. Nothing to do with me really, you know."

Leslie laid a small hand on his arm. "What a beast I've been!" she said softly. "Will you forgive me, Mr. Lester? You see, I liked you—that was why I felt hurt until I understood. Oh, I think it was the nicest thing I've ever heard of! I-I hardly know what to say to you."

"Oh, I say," stammered Dick, blushing furiously, "how jolly decent of you to be so splendid about it! I was afraid——' He stopped suddenly, gazing directly into her eyes; they were shining, wonderful, mysterious, and mirrored their secret for him to read. For a moment there was a magical silence, then he spoke again in a voice sounding strangely husky—

"Supposing an awfully dull cove—a cove like me, for example—told you he loved you, would you would you think it a

frightfully bad show?"

No," she answered quietly," I shouldn't.

I-I think I should be glad.

Very gently he placed his hands on her shoulders. "Really and truly?" he asked, drawing her nearer. "Because I'm the dull cove, Leslie."

With a little sigh of complete content, she nestled her curly head against his shoulder.

"I think you're wonderful," she murmured, "and—I love you, Dick."

Tenderly his arms encircled her, and, holding her closely, he whispered-

" Say it again, darling."

"I love you, Dick," she softly repeated. Wonderingly he bent his head and kissed her upturned lips.

" Now, let's just think," he said in an awed

voice, " not talk much, you know."



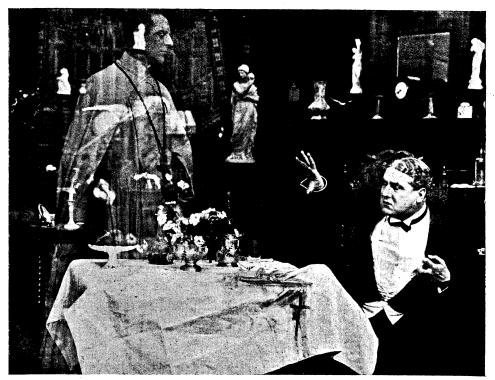
SUMMER'S HEART.

OH, the buttercups shine golden in the meadows ripe for hay, And the cuckoos call and call again as is the cuckoos' way, Whilst the larks are singing, singing, singing all the livelong day.

All the world was white with hawthorn just a little week ago, But to-day the great moon daisies lie on every bank like snow, And across the hedgerow's dainty green the frail wild roses grow.

Oh, the summer fields are white and gold, the summer skies are blue, And the summer birds are telling us that love is always new; But to me the heart of summer's heart is—just that you are you!

L. G. MOBERLY.



A GOOD EXAMPLE OF DOUBLE PHOTOGRAPHY FOR THE PURPOSES OF A GHOST EFFECT IN THE BROADWEST FILM "THE ANSWER."

THE INGENUITY OF THE CINEMA PRODUCER

By M. OWSTON-BOOTH

THE unending fascination of motion picture production lies in the fact that it has never outgrown, is never likely to outgrow, the experimental stage.

It is this fact that constitutes its claim to a place among the arts. All art is experimental. When it ceases to be so, it ceases to be art. When the painter loses his ideal, he retrogrades into mere craftsmanship. Art feeds upon strife, as flames upon their fuel.

According to his ambitions—and it may not matter very much whether these are artistic or commercial, provided the aim is toward better pictures—the motion picture producer is an inventor of ways and means to express, to convey, to suggest.

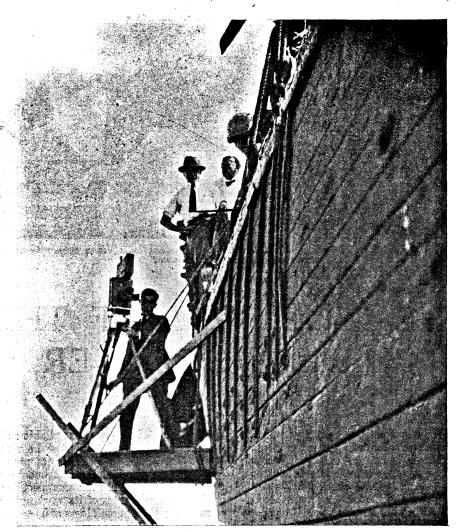
He must be for ever reaching out after the new and the untried. The medium through which he works is as pliable as it is complex, and the picture must be rare in which there is not something its producer has dared for the first time. Almost every story abounds with problems peculiar to itself, and the success of its working out is in ratio to the resourcefulness and ingenuity, firstly, of the producer, and, secondly, of his technical staff.

The curiosity of the public over the so-called "tricks" of the picture-makers is insatiable. It never can be satisfied, because these "tricks" are invented as fast as new contingencies arise. The most experienced producer might only be able to hazard guesses at the methods used by a colleague to obtain certain of his effects.

Here is the kind of situation which

necessitates new devices. In the film of "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea" there was an octopus that put up a grim fight against a pair of divers. Of course the octopus was not real. It was a construction of rubber sheeting and steel, a number of men working within it to get the effect of movement to the tentacles which

"Fatty" Arbuckle's latest picture, "Brewster's Millions," provided a severe test, of ingenuity. It was decided that there should be retrospective incidents portraying Brewster at the age of two years. The obvious thing to do would have been to find a baby for the infant rôle. But star and director had other ideas. Arbuckle, who



A CAMERA LOWERED OVER THE SIDE OF A SHIP FOR THE PURPOSE OF SHOWING JIM HAWKINS AND THE PIRATES LEAVING THE "HISPANIOLA" IN THE PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT PICTURE OF "TREASURE ISLAND."

seized the divers. Considering that every submarine scene in this picture was photographed, not in glass tanks within the studio, as is generally the case, but actually several leagues beneath the ocean, the difficulties encountered in faking this fight can be readily imagined.

weighs no less than eighteen stone, was dressed in baby clothes and placed in an enormous high chair. Every other article of furniture on the set, and every "property?" used in the scenes, was built proportionately large, with the result that the star's size was diminished, by contrast, to that of the average



BUILDING THE COUNTERFEIT VILLAGE OF THRUMS ON LONG ISLAND, AN ELABORATE SET CONSTRUCTED BY THE FAMOUS PLAYERS-LASKY CORPORATION FOR THE PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT FILM OF BARRIE'S "SENTIMENTAL TOMMY."



THE COMPLETED SCENE OF THE VILLAGE STREET OF THRUMS, WITH MAY McAVOY, AS GRIZEL, STOPPING THE DIRECTOR TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE SCRIPT BEFORE BEGINNING HER SCENE. ON THE RIGHT ARE THE CAMERA MAN AND GARETH HUGHES, WHO PLAYS TOMMY.

two-year-old child. A borrowed baby served as a model of infantile behaviour, and the ensuing scenes are comical examples of Arbuckle's genius as a mimic.

In another Arbuckle comedy, called "The Life of the Party," the star was required to film the incident it was necessary to borrow one of the highest office buildings in Los Angeles and sling elaborate scaffolding from the roof.

Precarious positions were taken up by the camera-men who turned the cranks for



THIS PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS HOW AN INSERT IS MADE. THE LEADING LADY, GLADYS GEORGE, IS HOLDING THE CARD TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED IN THE PRODUCTION OF THE PARAMOUNT-ARTGRAFT PICTURE "EASY STREET."

lean too far back in a swivel chair and fall through an open window ten stories high. He caught the window-sill as he fell, and clung there until someone came to pull him in. The action only takes a few seconds on the screen, but in order to

"Treasure Island," chiefly on platforms built on the side of the pirate vessel.

It is from specially erected platforms also that incidents in moving vehicles are photographed. The camera-man who was responsible for the racing scenes in Wallace



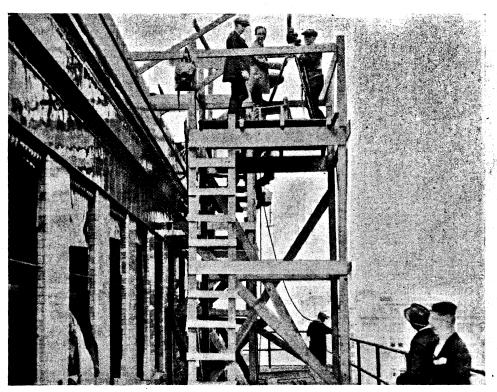
On the right-hand sule is the set for "The Price of Possession"; in the centre is the "Terzer" dance hall; next is "The Quarry," and beyond that the scene for "The Gilded Lily." INTERIOR VIEW OF THE MAIN FLOOR AT THE NEW PARAMOUNT STUDIO IN LONG ISLAND CITY.

Reid's motor stories "The Roaring Road" and "Excuse My Dust" risked his life a dozen times.

The producer of "Mary's Ankle" actually contrived the ocean and a liner about to leave her dock within the studio grounds. A swimming pool was camouflaged as sea by the use of two massive subterranean sweeps, which ruffled the surface of the water and gave it the appearance of waves. The portion of ship required was built up within a few hours by the studio carpenters.

film taken in the real city of Shanghai was inserted, and an audience of Chinese, before whom the completed production was tested, failed to identify the genuine from the invented.

On the vast floor of the new Paramount studio in Long Island City there is room for a score of settings to be in use at the same time. An Irish village may be cheek by jowl with Alaskan snows, whilst Arabian bazaars are divided by the thinnest of canvas from the windmills of Holland. Here



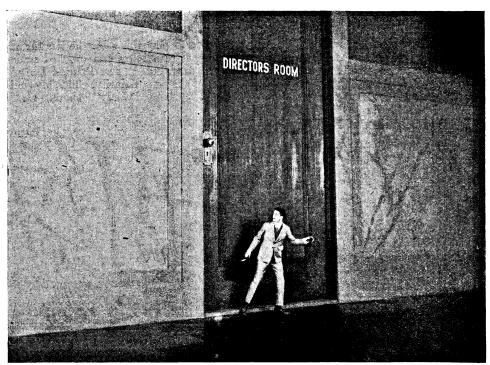
A SCAFFOLDING ESPECIALLY BUILT ON ONE OF THE HIGHEST OFFICE BUILDINGS IN LOS ANGELES FOR THE PURPOSE OF PHOTOGRAPHING A FALL THROUGH A TOP WINDOW IN THE PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT PICTURE "THE LIFE OF THE PARTY,"

A similar feat was accomplished for "A Society Exile," for which Venetian scenes of an expansive order had to be constructed under the studio roof. There was an actual canal one foot deep, through which gondolas moved on rollers. No one who saw the film could have guessed that the company had not sojourned in Venice for the taking of these scenes.

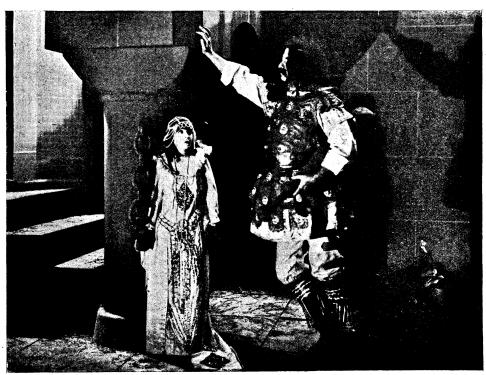
An entire Chinese quarter, representing a section of Shanghai, was recently built in the Paramount studio for a story of China called "Crooked Streets." Wherever possible,

is a chill December twilight in London; there, blazing noon on the burning Marquesas; and yonder, the golden morning light of spring-time in Brittany.

Some of the most remarkable settings yet erected in this gigantic studio were the interiors of the cottages inhabited by the characters of Barrie's "Sentimental Tommy." Exteriors were made several miles away on a piece of ground which had been converted into a wonderful replica of the tiny village of Kirriemuir, made famous by Barrie as Thrums. The houses in it appeared to have



"FEELING SMALL": AN EFFECT OBTAINED BY DUAL PHOTOGRAPHY. BRYANT WASHBURN AS THE HERO OF THE PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT FILM "PUTTING IT OVER," OUTSIDE THE BOARD ROOM OF HIS DIRECTORATE.



THE REVERSE EFFECT SEEN IN THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE ACTOR TO MAKE HIM A GIANT, FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE STORY OF THE INCE-PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT PRODUCTION "HER HUSBAND'S FRIEND."

stood there for years—so long, in fact, that their roofs sagged in the middle with age. Even the stone walls were vine-covered and moss-grown. The very streets and lanes seemed to have been trodden down by one America to play this *rôle*: he has the same whimsical expression and crooked smile as Barrie describes. "The Painted Lady" is Mabel Taliaferro, daintily, childishly pretty, as "The Painted Lady" should be. As



A CHINESE STREET SCENE ESPECIALLY BUILT FOR THE PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT FILM "CROOKED STREETS."

generation after another. It was only when scenes were being made that this lovely little village was populated, and then "Tommy" came in the form of Gareth Hughes, an English actor who went over to "Lady Alice," Virginia Valli wears some quaint costumes which represent the height of fashion in 1886.

The modern motion picture director resorts to faking, not to deceive his audience,



ARRANGING THE WOODED APPEARANCE OF A SCENE IN THE FOX FILM "A WOMAN THERE WAS,"

In order to give the setting more density, many palm trees were felled and brought to this spot, where they were held in position with ropes.



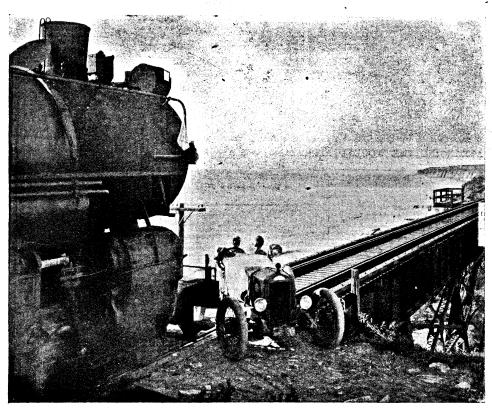
A WIND-STORM MADE BY AEROPLANE PROPELLERS AT A LATER STAGE OF THIS FILM.

By the loosening of the ropes, the trees previously placed in position fell and gave the effect of a sweeping tornado.

but because the real thing is impractical or even photographically inferior. He does it, with artistic license, for the pleasure and satisfaction of his audience. If he could make better pictures by taking his company to Scotland for the filming of Scotlish scenes, he would not hesitate to take it there. Experience has shown, however, that in few cases is it as successful to visit locations as to bring them to the studio. The conditions for picture production are only at their best when the producer is within easy reach of his own perfected studio equipment.

actress whose lovely ankles are utilised very frequently when the producer wants to insert a close-up of his heroine's feet!

Thrills are invented when the real thing is out of the question. When the express train comes head-on toward the automobile at the crossing, the reverse process is photographed. The car is placed on the track and the train drawn up to the car until the two touch. Then, whilst the camera is working, the train is backed away and the car similarly handled. The finished positive is shown on the screen in reverse



ARRANGING AN EXCITING MOMENT FOR THE TRAIN AND MOTOR SCENE IN THE PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT FILM "EXCUSE MY DUST."

There is a certain amount of invention resorted to of which the public never dreams—sly, subtle work which ensures the detailed beauty of a picture. When, for instance, the producer wants to show a close-up of a character's hand holding a letter or a visiting card so that the audience may gain its import, he will often substitute some other player's hand for that of the artiste portraying the character—any hand which will look better in his photograph. And in one studio there is a small-part

and the effect obtained is that of train and car dashing madly into collision.

As storms do not always occur when the producer happens to want them, a method has been evolved by which realistic storm effects can be photographed. Aeroplane propellers are brought into action outside the camera's range, and, if rain is necessary, gigantic sprays are used, with a water-power which can be regulated to suit the required "atmosphere." One of the finest storm scenes ever created was seen in the Fox film

"A Woman There Was." The tornado brought down trees. Needless to say, they were trees already felled and which had been propped up by ropes until the moment for their destruction arrived.

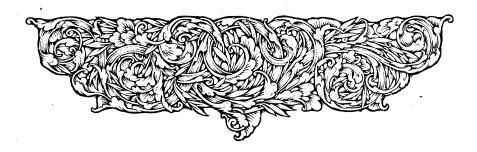
It is the producer of especially thrilling scenes who, naturally, is most often called upon to fake. The comedy maker comes a close second. Simple dramatic stories or love romances make many fewer demands in this direction. But possibly the hardest task of all is that of the director of the now popular psychological story, who must find substitutes for action, for plot, subtle methods of reaching the imagination of his audience.

These substitutes must be simple and natural in effect—otherwise they attract attention to themselves and away from the story, thus defeating the very purpose for which they are designed—and their very existence is unguessed at by the average picture-goer. It would never occur to him, for instance, that the pathos of the scene in "Something to Think About," in which an old blinded man has to give up the home of a lifetime and go into the infirmary, was largely wrought by the producer's ingenious choice of articles to be handled by the old man in his last preparations to leave—the clock he begins to wind from sheer force of habit, the photographs of his dear departed that he wants to take with him because the very handling of them conjures up visions before his sightless eyes, the favourite old cup and saucer he has to leave behind.

Since it is the very freshness of his methods which gives his pictures force, the director of human interest films must be for ever experimenting in ways and means of touching the sympathy of his audience. Rarely are his effects attained so simply as in "Something to Think About." Often for a tiny detail which suggests itself as "atmosphere" he will spend as much time and money as the earliest producers expended upon a whole picture.

The director of Bryant Washburn's film "Putting It Over" made a clever experiment in the portrayal of a character's mood when he contrived that his hero, an ambitious but timid clerk in a hustling New York firm, should shrink, Alice-like, to a mere few inches in height at the door of the directors' room to which he had been summoned. The "feeling small" effect was accomplished by dual photography, and no less than ten duplicate sets of different sizes had to be built up to show the hero in graduated sizes against the door during the shrinking process. The bigger the door, the smaller the figure would appear; that, of course, was the principle on which the sets were designed and used. The sets were photographed first in their graduated sizes, then the film was put into the camera and run through again. This time a mask was placed over the lens of the camera to correspond with the size and shape of the door and surrounding walls, and pictures of the actor were imprinted in the intervening

To take two exposures on one piece of film in motion picture photography means that every movement of the players requires careful calculation: the movement of those taking part in the second exposure must be arranged to synchronise with the action registered in the first. Imagine the difficulties encountered when the characters in the two different exposures kiss or shake Yet such things are often done. There are some amazing examples of double exposure in the Wallace Reid film "Always Audacious," also in the new Enid Bennett picture "Her Husband's Friend," and in Broadwest's two recent films "In Full Cry" and "The Answer." Perhaps the most remarkable ever done, however, are those in the much-talked-of spiritualistic picture "Earthbound," which shows some of the finest experimental cinematography of recent times.



A KNIGHT OF THE ROAD

By B. A. CLARKE

Author of "Minnows and Tritons," "Both Sides of the Road," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM HATHERELL

N the commercial room of "The Crown," at Northview. Tom Wood the roaring fire; at the moment there was nowhere else for him. High tea was being served, and the table, with all the extra leaves in, stretched from the stuffed eagle in the window to within six feet of the tiled hearth; writing slabs monopolised the side walls. A few of these were vacant; but all the time men were arriving, part of whose daily ritual was writing up orders during the preparation of their evening meal. Tom had no orders to write up, so why occupy desk space? Above every writer flared a naked gas-light. All windows were tight closed, all curtains drawn; you could not imagine anything cosier. Among the score of men at tea, a dozen were absorbed in the London evening papers, which had just arrived, using cruets for reading stands, to the embarrassment of shy neighbours craving mustard.

Tom should by this time have been well on with his meal. He had given his order

clearly—indeed, impressively.

"Fred, I want some tea—tea, you understand, not water bewitched. Now, tell me what else to order."

Fred, as if conscious that he had been put

upon his honour, had replied-

"Honestly, Mr. Wood, I can't recommend the turbot"—there was none left—"but if there is a real lemon sole in the house, you shall have it; if not, I will look out for a nice piece of plaice. You leave it to me."

Tom had left it to him, apparently for

keeps.

And this was the second time to-day that Fred had failed him; the first was more serious.

Arriving at ten minutes past four in the hotel omnibus, Tom had found Fred on the

doorstep. How familiar it all looked—the old "Crown" and the old waiter in his immemorial dress-suit! Nothing had changed in Tom's long absence—nothing. It was at "The Crown," five years before, that he had bidden farewell to the road. What a send-off the boys had given him! Would he ever forget that Auld Lang Syne at midnight? Charley Cuff, since dead (dear old Charley!), had held his right hand, and Fred his left. How appropriate that Fred should be the first to welcome him on his return to commercial travelling! But Fred showed no intention of doing so, and when Tom rushed forward with hand outstretched, the old waiter stared blankly.

"Don't you remember me, Fred? I

am Tom Wood."

"Glad to see you, Mr. Wood."

Obviously the name meant nothing to him.

After this rebuff Tom spent two hours in a glass shelter on the Marine Parade, thinking about tea in the homelike commercial room amid cronies who would be so delighted to welcome his return. What a time they would have! But hilarity must not pass into rowdiness. Tom would see to that. Perhaps Bert Pilchard would be there with his practical jokes; he usually made Northview the second week in January. No, Bert had had a stroke, and was being kept by the Provident Fund. But there would be others to welcome back one whom a trade paper (on the occasion of Tom's retirement) had dubbed "the doyen of the Jutlandshire boot and shoe trade." After looking up the word, Tom had carried it with him into exile. blessed syllables had helped him to bear Catford's coldness towards her distinguished sons. One honest doyen was worth a whole

terrace of bank clerks, supercilious puppies! Tom had no patience with them. Qualifications of trade and territory dropped away from his title, leaving him (in his own eyes) the accepted dean of bagmen generally. Such a personage, returning to his old ground after an absence of five years, had a right to expect a reception from the fraternity. But what had been his? doubtful nod in answer to his own from one, and a casual greeting from another, who had not noticed that he had ever been away, and this without the assurance that Tom was looking the very picture of health, a compliment he had come to regard as his right. Age had touched him to corpulence (which he carried well enough, being of large frame) and a mottled purpleness of complexion that he flattered himself spoke loudly (if mendaciously) of wellbeing. For he did not enjoy good health, nor even imagine he did, but only that he appeared to, and of this he was inexplicably proud. Customers needing an extension of credit had always known how to flatter

"A cold day you have brought with you, Tom; but there, I don't suppose that you know it is cold.'

Then the old boy would inflate his chest. "No, sir, when Tom Wood worries about heat or cold, he will think it is time to hand in his checks."

The only season when he wasn't a martyr to lumbago and rheumatism generally was the dog days, when over him hung the threat of apoplexy. But although he had the best of reasons for disassociating ruddiness from health, he both expressed and, what was stranger, felt pity for those who, not afflicted with his particular form of indigestion, struck a lower note of colour.

"I ought to have made my re-entry at the commercial dinner," said Tom to himself, and for the moment his anger left him, for he simply loved the mid-day meal, with its ritual of Mr. President and Mr. Vice, its ceremonious politeness, and its symbolic close, the penny collection for the Orphan Schools and the Benevolent Fund, never missed at any commercial dinner in the land. Tom's forty years on the road had not changed this rite into routine; his honest heart went out still in good-will and Was there another calling every one of whose members thus daily and publicly admitted the claim of childhood upon his manhood, of weakness upon his strength?

Every penny was a chirp of gratitude for the inestimable blessings of occupation and health. Birds and commercial travellers cannot dine without a look-up.

In comparison, how uninspiring was this individualistic high tea! Even at this moment a waiter was accepting an order upon terms which, if words meant anything, secured to the orderer the sole of soles, which of right was Tom's. Suppose one demanded of Mr. President the best cut! No, Tom could not suppose it.

Here Fred broke in upon his reflections. "Your sole is on the table, Mr. Wood."

"It ought to have been up twenty minutes ago. Did you go out and catch the fish? Well "-he raised the Britannia metal cover—" it isn't a whale, now you have caught it."

"No, and it isn't a whitebait," Fred replied, making himself a bangle of empty

toast-racks.

This was the first time Tom had sat down to a meal in "The Crown" amid complete strangers. No one spoke to him: the traditional friendliness of the road seemed gone. In his isolation he listened to the table conversations in progress. How useless the talk was—a mere repetition of what had been said a thousand times! A whipper-snapper, with a white, foolish face, was giving a résumé of a controversy he had sustained successfully with a stationmaster.

"Quite so, quite so," patiently replied a mature traveller, who, no doubt, had confuted railway jacks-in-office when the other was in his cradle. "After all, what are railway officials but servants of the

"I say they are our servants," the boy blustered. "Where would they be without our luggage? They'd have nothing to do; their jobs would cease. Why, my skips take a good five minutes putting into the van, and they treat me like this! Where is their gratitude?"

Less irritating, although equally platitudinous, was a hearty traveller with white side-whiskers.

"One thing I will claim for the road you do get the fresh air Compare the air here with that of London Wall!

The speaker inhaled rapturously the vitiated atmosphere of the commercial room, which (to judge by one's nose) was composed in equal parts of gas and haddock. He was addressing an elderly skeleton who maintained a pretence of life upon cocoa and rusks.

"There is only one place in the world where you can get fresh air," said the cocoa-drinker, speaking very deliberately, "I mean air that is really fresh, and that is on the western slope of Peru, where the wind has had the whole expanse of the Pacific to blow over. When I lived there, I was very fond of walking."

The hearty traveller shook his head, indicating that he had met this weakness before, and knew to what evils it led.

"What for?" said the other weakly.

"To walk upon, and I never regretted my purchase, for it was found to be composed in part of borax I am over here now to interest capitalists."

"The very thing I was about to suggest."
The hearty man nodded sagaciously, as if he had a wide experience in selling borax mountains.

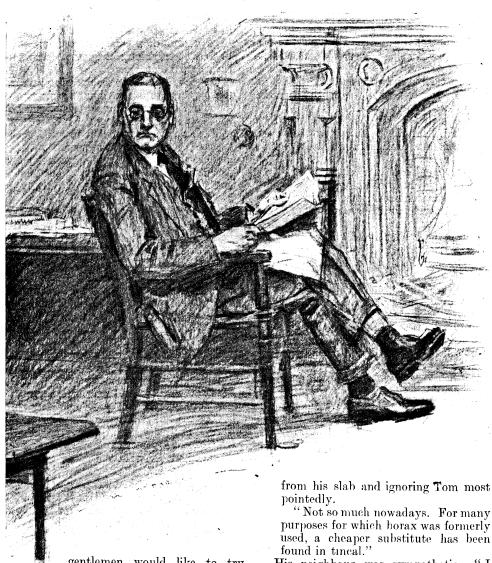


"Hating to be overlooked, I bought the local mountain."

"Perhaps you would like to sample it, sir." (The old man produced a glass

bottle containing tablets.) "Taste onethey can't poison you. Perhaps the other

"Your mountain, sir, will be worth a fortune," said a writer, turning round



gentlemen would like to try them." The luxuries were passed round and accepted thankfully, most of the recipients, however, deciding that the best way of assimilating Peruvian borax was through the eye.

Tom, having read recently a magazine article upon borax developments

in Bolivia, plunged in.

"Borax, gentlemen, was first introduced into Europe in the reign of James I. The conditions attending "

His neighbour was sympathetic. was afraid that was how it would turn

out. Very rough luck, to be sure."

"I must not grumble." He stirred his cocoa resignedly. "It does no good, and included in my purchase was a lake of tincal. This is tincal." Tablets of tincal were distributed, and then the funny man broke in.

"There always is a funny man, confound

him!" thought Tom.

"We had better make a commercial dinner of this. As I am at the top of the table, consider me Mr. President. Waiter, set the tincal lake before me. Mr. Vice, will you be so kind as to carve the mountain?"

But Tom would not stand jesting upon

this subject.

"I protest against this travesty. When our friend here has filled the office of Mr. President as often as I have, he won't so lightly turn it into ridicule."

"Mr. Jenkins on the telephone!" shouted

a boy at the door.

The mountain climber tottered away.

"Fred," called Tom across the room, "who is the gentleman who calls himself Mr. Jenkins?"

"Mr. Jenkins."

"How did he get in here?"

Fred having nothing to say said it, and

went on laying for a newcomer.

"Another time, Fred, show Mr. Jenkins to the coffee-room; he will be more at home there. What made you think him a traveller? Did he bring any sample cases?"

"My dear old friend," said the humorist, "Mr. Jenkins travels in mountains, and sells from a catalogue. You can't expect him to take them round on a barrow."

There was a general laugh, which, although it was in a way against him, assured Tom that he had at last got the floor: his remarks were being followed. He continued with more confidence.

"Do you know, gentlemen, the moment I set eyes upon Mr. Jenkins I said to myself, 'That is no commercial traveller'?"

"I think, sir," said the hearty man, "that it is very wonderful the way hotel clerks pick out the travellers. Let a coffee-room guest and a traveller register together, the clerk does not need to be told which is which."

Tom could not agree.

"The wonder to me is that there should ever be a mistake like to-day's. A commercial gentleman has a bearing of his own. There is a quiet self-confidence, a sort of 'here - I - am - and - don't - you - try - to - get rid-of-me' air that other gentlemen cannot acquire."

"They do not invariably try," said an old-young man in gold spectacles from

a seat beside the fire.

Tom bristled.

"Is there any characteristic of commercial gentlemen that others should *not* try to cultivate?"

"None, I am sure. But would not their

praises come better from the other gentlemen?"

"You might begin, for, now I come to look at you, you haven't much the cut of a traveller yourself. What trade are you in? Whom do you represent?"

A chorus of protest broke forth at this breach of travelling etiquette. The blood

rushed to Tom's head.

"I have been on the road forty years—forty years—and I decline to study commercial etiquette under beginners and boys. This is a commercial room, I take it? Very well, then, I have the right to insist that its use be confined to commercial men. If anyone can deal with my arguments, I will listen to him respectfully, but not to cracked-voiced hobbledehoys' 'Really, sir, oh, really!'"

He imitated a young fellow with a defective palate, who now answered him

hotly

"If this had happened at the mid-day dinner, Mr. President would have expressed himself. Certainly you can ask a man to show that he is a traveller or to withdraw, but publicly to demand the name of his house has never been permitted."

Tom looked round. Heads were shaking

in reprobation.

"Am I not right, gentlemen?" squeaked the youth, following up his advantage:

Everyone thought he was. Tom tried to

cover his enforced retreat by bluster.

"Very well, have it your own way, have
it your own way. I apologise. It is the last

time I shall try to protect you from intruders. So far as I am concerned, the management may fill the commercial room

with baronets."

Gold spectacles had taken a chair beside the fire. A well-groomed man took a seat beside him and addressed him in a lowpitched, cultivated voice.

"If you are new to the road, I hope you won't take your assailant as a fair representative of us. He is one of the old school

that is rapidly dying out."

"Well, I should say the sooner he dies out, the better. But I am not so unjust as to tar you all with the same brush. There are bullies in every calling, and not everywhere are they so sternly put down. But if our friend had been allowed to press his point, I must have admitted that I am not a commercial traveller, but a manufacturer—Packer and Salts of London Wall. I am Packer." (The urbane traveller showed an increased respect.) "I am staying in

Northview for my health, at the Métropole. A Mr. Hood, to whom we think of giving this territory, has an appointment with me for ten-thirty to-morrow, which necessitates his being here overnight. Hearing this afternoon that a complete set of samples for him has arrived, I thought that if I saw my man to-night and engaged him-as I fully expect to, for his references are unexceptionable—he could begin work first thing in the morning—'an hour before' eleven'-you know the proverb. He is not registered here, I find, but the last train from London is barely due. The afternoon express is by so much the best train of the day that I expected Mr. Hood by that."

Well, I must run off, Mr. Packer. hope you don't resent my introducing

myself."

"I shan't when you do."

"Of course, you haven't my name-W. H. Hewitt.'

"I am glad to know you, Mr. Hewitt.

Good evening.'

Tom filled the chair Mr. Hewitt had just vacated. It was embarrassing sitting beside his foe, but in a few minutes there would be more room. Waiters were taking leaves out of the table, for it was now past the meal hour, and the movement travellers had become centrifugal. Brainy youths were starting for solitary walks along the deserted and wind-swept seafront; pleasure-seekers discussed the local stage.

"I see that 'Little Guy Fawkes,' with the Number Three Touring Company, is on at the Opera House. Does anyone know

what they are like?"

"I do," said the hearty traveller. saw them at Hallsham. Very good indeed. One of my customers, who has seen both, prefers them to the London company."

"That is the worst of the road," said he of the defective palate, "you have to put up with such rotten shows. But I suppose it is our duty to support them, poor beggars! How early must one go to be sure of a good seat in the pit?"

He hurried away on his errand of mercy. A dozen knights of the road, strangers until that evening, started off arm-in-arm in the same direction. • A Northview bootbuyer, an old customer of Tom's, put his head inside the door. Tom rose to greet him, but resumed his seat on realising that he had been forgotten, and that the buyer was here by invitation of another traveller. Three other buyers appeared. Each was

greeted enthusiastically by a knight and There was the less led off theatreward. need for them to hurry that the best seats were awaiting them. Buyers are not found in the pit.

"Bah!" thought Tom. "Let these freespenders return to their ground after a few years' absence, and they will discover what

these friendships are worth."

And then George Watkin arrived to save Tom's return from utter failure and dis-"Old George" they had appointment. called him in the glorious days when "old" suggested popularity only. The dear fellow was looking really old now, although he couldn't be much beyond Tom's own age. But there was no winter in his greeting.

"Tom Wood, or I am a Dutchman! Tom, you old devil, what are you doing down here? After the big orders again, if I know you. Can't the old firm get along without

you ? "

"I haven't gone back to them, George. At present I am not with anyone, but I expect to sign on to-morrow with Packer and Salts."

(Mr. Packer took a letter from his pocket and examined the signature closely. could see now that the first letter of the

surname was not "H," but "W.")
"A progressive house, Tom. I congratulate you. I never thought you had proper scope with the old firm. And I am glad you have conquered your old enemy lumbago. Do you remember when you stood like a statue in the roadway at Caderly until I carried you into 'The Bull'? That was a bad touch. It laid you up for a whole week in the busy season."

"No, George, the lumbago is not conquered."

"You haven't lost your savings?"

"Not money, but something I valued more."

He broke off. Tears slowly filled his eyes and overflowed down his purple cheeks.

Mr. Watkin took his hand.

"Not your wife, Tom?"

"No, my son—pneumonia—took him in four days—a strong, healthy man he seemed, too. But you knew Frank."

"Of course, Tom, of course, and loved him. He came to me for shelter when-

Well, you know the night I mean."

"And you encouraged him in his rebellion, or, at least, you didn't tell him, as you might have done, that he alone was to blame, but spoke of faults of temper upon both sides and mutual forgiveness. What had Frank to forgive in me, I would like to know? Well, it makes no difference now, George, no difference now, so I won't quarrel with you. I haven't so many friends left that I can afford to lose any."

"It wasn't so sudden, I hope, as to deny

you both a chance to make it up?"

"How could we make it up when Frank persisted that my temper, my uncontrolled temper—mine, if you please—caused the breach? Was I to admit that? But he died in my arms, which had carried him so often when he was a little curly-head. Women always recall the period when their children were quite helpless, but with men it is later—the age when, being carried, they secure their own safety, by clinging on to one's collar. This is where they take hold, George. I can feel Frank's warm little knuckles now against my Adam's apple. Why do they ever grow up to quarrel with their fathers? I have a portrait of Frank at three."

He took a cabinet photograph from his pocket and handed it to his friend, who

examined it silently.

"Wonderful curls—aren't they, George?—and entirely natural; never touched by curling tongs. Do you see any likeness to me? You don't, eh? Well, people used to. Perhaps I have changed."

"Did Frank leave any provision for his

three motherless little girls?"

"How did you hear of his wife's death?

You lost sight of him years ago."

Mayor's Show day, with the three children in black. He asked me to find them a window. Ours were all filled with the partners' friends—a regular luncheon-party. The three mites were so disconsolate, that I took them in to see our boss, who, as a rule, is about as safe to approach as a cub-robbed bear. 'Every possible seat allotted, George, but what is the matter with laps?' he said when told of our trouble. And the little four-year-old—Millie I think her name is—saw the show through on his lap, and didn't want to leave him.'

That would be Millie; she is like that with her grandmother. My wife has begun life over again with her. The girls are with us permanently. Poor Frank left nothing but a life insurance for five hundred pounds. So now you understand my return to the

road."

"Yes, but can you stand it? When lumbago comes on, you must lie up."

"Two days in bed does the trick usually.

I shall be able to wangle it so that London Wall will never know."

"I don't like it, Tom, I don't like it.

Is the salary absolutely necessary?"

"Not quite, but Frank's daughters shan't be limited to necessaries. I promised him to provide for them, and I will. Don't you worry about me, George. I can see it through. It is a case for setting one's teeth and holding on—the bulldog strain. It has been bred out of the puppies that fill commercial rooms to-day; they ought to be clerks."

"I hope it will answer, Tom. Well, I must get a turn on the front before I go to bed. Air straight from the North Pole doctors now prescribe me. Funny, isn't it? In case you turn in before I get back, I will say 'Good night' now. God bless you, old

boy!"

He went out, giving Mr. Packer the chance he had been awaiting. During the friends' conversation changes of purpose had been shown on his face, hostility giving place to kindly interest, and this to perplexity and regret. Well, if he were going to speak, now was the time, while they had the room to themselves.

"Mr. Wood, I believe. I am Mr. Packer."

Tom's jaw dropped.

"Don't be disturbed about our little passage of arms; my decision has not been influenced by that."

"You are speaking," said poor Tom nervously, "as if you are going to turn me

down."

"As a traveller I must. Your conversation has shown me that to put you upon the road would be cruel to you and unfair to myself. You might break down completely in the middle of a journey and lose us a season's trade. No, it is no use appealing, Mr. Wood; that is settled. But I can make a position for you inside. The salary will be small at first, because of your lack of office experience—only two hundred a year. What do you say?"

"I should be a clerk," faltered Tom, "in position a junior, and have to take orders

and reproofs from young men?"

Mr. Packer nodded.

Tom saw himself in the position. There was not a humiliating circumstance he did not visualise.

"Well, what is your decision?"

"I will come," said Tom quietly. "Two hundred a year will do a lot for my grand-daughters."

The bulldog strain was vindicated.

"I am glad to hear it. How will next Monday morning do for your start? That will give me time to write to my partner. No, don't come to the door with me."

But Tom insisted.

"Good night, sir. You have treated me

very generously."

He returned to the commercial room for his hat and overcoat. Henceforth for him was the coffee-room. He found it deserted, cold, and utterly cheerless. He rang the bell. A young waiter, a stiff fellow in an aggressively new dress-suit, took his order for a dry ginger ale, calling him "sir," as was but just. He had forfeited the right to be addressed familiarly by waiters.

Tom sipped his ginger ale in solitude, and thought of his forty-five years as a knight of the road, for even in retirement he had been a commercial traveller by conviction. Now he had cut himself adrift. He had become a clerk and a coffee-room guest. It was hard to realise that he was not a commercial traveller. On public occasions chairmen would say, "The commercial travellers of England have ever been foremost in charity," or patriotism, as the case might be, and he would not be Idealising the fraternity, Tom included. regarded it, not as including many true men, but as composed of a specially high type of manhood-knights of the road. And now he was unknighted, had hacked off his own

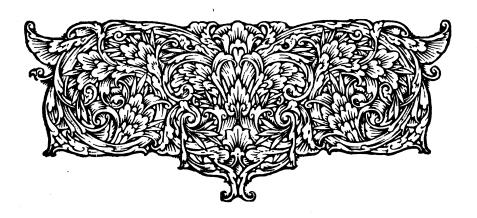
Tom sat up until the throng returned from the theatre. How happy they all seemed, trooping along the passage! Yielding to pressure, the buyers were coming back for a final chat. Why not join them

and have one last jovial hour for a farewell? "But principle is principle, and if the commercial room is used by other than commercial travellers, it loses its meaning. Let us beware of the thin edge of the wedge, gentlemen."

Tom pulled himself up. Why had this word "gentlemen" occurred in an unspoken exhortation to himself? Of course it was a recollection of occasions when he had defended the sanctity of the room against other intruders. Landlords, when a stray accountant or insurance agent wants lunch, have a way of saying: "I am sorry, but we have no meal prepared. Of course we could cook you a chop, but a very good dinner is being served in the commercial room; perhaps the gentlemen will let you join them. When he makes the humble request, it is usually granted graciously by Mr. President, with the acquiescence, expressed or tacit, of everyone at table. But Tom always stood out against this as a matter of principle. Invariably he carried his point, the unwritten law of the road sustaining him. A small matter, some may think, to let a well-conducted accountant sit down with them, but it would be the thin edge of the wedge, gentlemen, the thin edge of the wedge. Unchallenged now, Tom could finish his evening in that abode of bodily comfort and good fellowship, for none knew of his altered status, but he would be the thin edge of the wedge.'

No, he would not return to the loved haunts. That was decided once and for ever. But the flesh being weak, he held himself in his chair until the passage cleared and the door of the commercial room closed

upon the last happy reveller.



THE MIRAGE

By M. L. C. PICKTHALL

ILLUSTRATED BY DUDLEY TENNANT

PROPPED against the central post of the hut, Hallam was entering the day's events in his diary. He was growing very weak, but his small, firm writing was unshaken. When he could write no more, he intended to place the diary in the tin box nailed to the post above him, where Croft had placed the meteorological records and Leseur the maps.

At first the diary had been but an impersonal narrative of adventure. It had become a man's message to his friends.

"I cannot live another week," wrote Hallam, "but I am not suffering. The utter solitude, as well as the starvation, has had a curious effect. The ordinary faculties and apprehensions through which men suffer have in my case been paralysed for weeks, and, as though released by a drug, other faculties have taken their place. I want you to know that I am not unhappy, that I am not—"

With the pencil poised and a faint smile on his lips, he had commenced the last word "alone." He remained so, motionless, waiting. His hands and feet tingled. What life he had left him seemed actually withdrawing itself from all his senses as he knew them and focussing in some sense

he did not know.

Presently he lifted his head slowly. Looking at the entrance of the hut, he spoke.

"Come in, my darling," he said.

Before he had finished speaking, the

familiar thing had occurred.

The wall of the hut was not there. He saw the illimitable white waste outside as he knew it was. But between him and it, just within the vanished wall, stood the girl.

She stood quite still, looking at him. He could see nothing of her face but the eyes, she was so wrapped in fur. As she stood, she drew off one fur glove; in that place the appearance of her fair bared hand was like the opening of a flower. Then she came towards him.

Hallam said: "You haven't been for two days!"

What answer that strange released sense of his received, no other could have heard. He smiled, but went on with a pleading that rose to passion: "It won't last much longer! Surely it won't! See, I'm getting very far from life as I knew it! Isn't the time come yet? Must I wait longer?"

In a minute he went on, more faintly: "Just your hand! Just your hand, then! Let me feel it one minute—a minute . . ."

She seemed to stoop towards him, putting aside the furs from her face. It was solemn and very tender. A great light flashed into Hallam's eyes. He held out his arms. He said: "I've never seen your face until to-day! The time's quite near now. Isn't it? Quite near!"

Presently his hands fell. Her face had not approached any nearer to his own. His dying eyes looked into her bodiless ones. "I understand, darling," he whispered—

"I understand, darling," he whispered—"I understand. When you kiss me, I shall die. And—and the time's not quite yet."

After a little he whispered again: "Let it be soon, dear love. Let it be soon."

Then he was alone.

He slipped sideways, rolled over, and lay with his face to the floor.

Soon he raised himself and dragged himself to the door of the hut. He drew aside the boards and tarpaulins. He went out.

The white waste stretched unbroken. Not a footprint marked it. Nothing was there that had not been there for weeks. Only the foxes had dragged the gnawed caribou skull on the river-beach a little farther from the hut, and the cross on Croft's cairn had tilted in the wind.

He went, lifted the stones with infinite

effort and straightened the cross.

He was exhausted when he returned to the hut and lay down in his blankets. He said aloud: "To-day she showed me her face. It can't be long to wait now." He slept, dreaming of that face, and of the moment towards which his whole life drew like music—when she should kiss him and he should die.

He had seen her first on the day when he raised the cairn over Croft's body—a month after Leseur had gone on his desperate effort to bring help to the survivors of the expedition. Then she had come no nearer than the hut's wall, and had stayed no more than a minute. Nor had he seen her again for a week. But since then her visits had been of increasing frequency and meaning. They brought to Hallam, waiting alone in the hut, an extraordinary knowledge of fulfilment.

Yet sometimes he wondered that his strong life should not have borne love's fruit until now, when it was passing from him, and that he bore it for a ghost. But

he was content.

The next day he made shift to go out and examine his snares. He found nothing in them. The scraps of leather with which he had baited them were nibbled by lemmings. That was all.

He went back to the hut, propped himself by the central post, and waited. He had nothing else to do. He tried to write in his diary. His pencil moved slowly over the page. But he wrote nothing but "She has not come to me to-day." He placed the diary in the tin box with the maps and other records. Those words were the last in it.

He could not sleep. Hunger-pains took him, he was twisted with cruel cramps. These lessened hourly as his bodily strength lessened. He was very weak.

All night he lay by the post waiting for her.

The interminable hours passed over the hut. Staring at the low roof, he could almost see the stars wheeling above him, the inexorable march of the heavens. Later he looked at the place where Croft had slept—empty. At Leseur's corner—empty. At his own place, soon to be empty. The desolation pierced through his hunger-drugged dreams like a sword. A horror of emptiness filled that hut, as it had in the first days before she came.

He lay on his face and cried to her. "Come!" he said. "Come! Don't leave me so long alone! I can't bear it!" His voice was broken. Nothing of his words was left for the hush to take but "Come, come,

come. . . ."

Suddenly he was stilled.

He had the sense that this cry was an

entity, freed from him, that it was travelling, spreading across the wastes as a ripple spreads on water, far beyond his hearing, compelling, pleading.

The walls of the hut were no barrier to him. He was aware of every change on the enclosing waste. He was aware of the coming

of the dawn.

The sun glared in the south. A beam, travelling the snow, touched the hut with a golden light. A fox barked. Hallam lifted his head.

In a minute he whispered: "Come in, my darling."

She had come with the dawn.

Behind her, as usual, the wall had vanished. He looked into the open. Black in the light, he saw what might have been a dog-team drawn up there, and men waiting by a sled. It troubled him. Then he forgot. For she was very near—nearer than she had been at all. And never before had she heard him call. . . .

He looked into her face. "I called," whispered Hallam. "I called, and you

came!"

Ecstasy held him for a time uncounted. Then slowly it passed. He was shocked with

a human apprehension.

She was so close, so vividly real, that he perceived the shadow of lashes on her cheek, which was itself a shadow, the quill pattern on the edge of her fur hood. But it was the visionary and beloved face that shocked him.

She was leaning above him as he lay; one hand was raised as if in solemn warning; her eyes looked intently, anxiously into his. And he saw that her shadow-face was worn into delicate hollows of fatigue, that her eyes were ringed with black, her red mouth drawn with lines of endurance. She glanced back over her shoulder; he thought she wrung her hands. Then desperately, earnestly, her eyes again besought him.

She had come to him-in weary and eager

haste, driven.

Hallam lifted himself with a great cry. . "Oh," he said, "is it possible I've made you suffer?"

She was fading, retreating from him, with that air of trouble, of strain, of suspense, which in some way tore at his human heart. She looked at him entreatingly. It was as if her bodiless lips said: "Wait for me. . . ."

Hallam fell forward on his face, his hands stretched out. "You've come so close," he prayed, "come closer yet. Hold me! Take me! Take me with you! Don't leave me alone! Not again!"

She was gone. He was gazing at the wall of the hut. He dragged himself presently to the door, opened it. Nothing was there. The snows were untrodden by any feet but his own.

Hallam dropped forward across the door. He was murmuring unimagined words of tenderness and reproach, such as he had never used to any living woman. He stayed there so long that the little foxes came from the rocks on their delicate snowy feet, sniffing, wondering if he yet lived.

When he went into the hut and shut the door again, they fled, but not very far.

He rested against the post. He waited.

Whatever he suffered, he would not again call her, for fear he should hurt her where she was.

The solitude passed over him in waves of dread he could hardly distinguish from physical pain. Outside the hut he fancied the rocks crowding in upon him, the little snowy foxes pacing toward him, the waste itself rising and flooding in upon him like a sea. The pressure of that emptiness made him gasp and groan. He clenched his hands over his trembling mouth lest ite should call her.

Then it passed. He was at peace. He

slept.

He woke, slept, woke; he was in a state of expectation so whole, so acute, that it was like a state of suspended life. He could not have said he was unhappy, though this state was pierced now and then with pain and terror he was no longer able to separate.

Then he awoke into that mental clarity which precedes the end. And he knew that

she had not come.

For hours, for nights and indistinguishable days, she had not come. She had left him.

He lay, too weak to move, staring at the wall of the hut. It did not thin. He said again and again: "Come in, my darling. Come in." But no appearance stood between him and the snows.

A great confusion and dismay possessed him.

She had come so often and so faithfully. She had even obeyed his call. Time after time, since he had been sick and alone, he had tingled to her approach, the assurance of her eyes had comforted him. He had looked forward, as to life, to the day when she would come quite near, when she would take him in her arms, when her kiss, as he dreamed, would claim him, and he would die. In a strange way he had been confident

of her reality—that is, of her existence apart from himself. Now he wondered if she was no more than a projection of his own dying brain, a shadow into which he had involuntarily woven all the unfilled wants of his manhood and his youth.

She did not come. His doubt darkened

to despair.

He knew himself for what he was—alone and dying.

He said: "If she doesn't come by to-morrow—if she doesn't come... I won't wait any longer."

He awoke again and knew it was day, and that she had not come. His strange unearthly hope dropped from him like a dream.

He looked about the hut, trying to remember where things were. The guns were on little brackets under the roof. Leseur had left them there. They had rusted badly. Was the 22 within reach?

He crept to that wall. He tried to raise himself. He could not. He strained his arms towards the guns. Strain as he would, he could not lay hold on the lowest one. He dropped, whimpering. Leseur had taken the revolver. Wasn't there anything?

There was the harpoon in the corner.

With pain he crawled to it. Dragging it after him, he went to the post. With pain he took out his knife and opened it. The knife might have done, but his hands had no strength for such a blow. He dug a hole for the butt of the harpoon; at an upward angle, with its butt braced in the earth floor, he bound it to the post. His strength hardly endured even for that. He fell, fainting, but again heaved himself half erect, holding by the post.

He had only to fall again, to fall on the

He stopped, half turned, staring at the

He had no time to welcome her. She was there beside him. Her anguished face stared into his. Her hands were flung. upward. He could see the drawn circle of her mouth.

It was as if she had screamed to him.

Hallam began to tremble. Her face, twisted with pity, scorn, appeal, was more than he could bear. He hid his own.

"You left me," he whispered. "Dear,

you left me. . . ."

"I have not left you! I am coming! Wait for me!"

Over infinite distance, the distance of the flesh and the spirit, her answer seemed to reach Hallam. She was so near, so real in her passion, that he tried to touch her, to hold her. She flashed away.

It was as if she had but a minute to spare him—a minute in which her spirit might send to his, across what unmeasured space, that trumpet-cry: "I have not left you! I am coming! Wait for me!"

Hallam knelt beside the post, gazing at the wall. He knew now that he must wait

until she came.

His whole being passed into the expectation of her. He knew that, when she returned, it would be for the last time—that when she went, he would go with her.

He knew nothing else.

Dawn came again to the hut on the tundra, enfolding it with fierce and solitary glory. Over it the hours wheeled, as the peaked shadows of the barren hills wheeled on the plain. The light receded. The aurora made the dawn of night. With the stars, and for the last time, she came.

Some sound or tremor shook Hallam. He

opened his eyes.

The wall of the hut was down. Beyond stretched, as always, the limitless waste, lighted with the grey sheen of stars, the red flush of the aurora. A dog-team was drawn up outside the hut, two men waited by it. Between him and the waste she stood.

"Come in, my darling," Hallam said

joyfully.

She came towards him in the twilight of the North, carrying a lantern in her hand. She knelt at his side, drew off her fur gloves, set back her hood. He could see the quill pattern on the edge, the shadows of fatigue on the gentle face of his dream. This time he could perceive the heaving of her bosom, her fingers moving as if in doubt.

"You've come for me, my darling," said

Hallam quietly.

"I've come. I'm in time, after all. We

were afraid-afraid!"

Wonder touched him. Then he smiled. "I've never heard your voice before. I've only seen your face. That's as it would be, of course. You're very close this time, beloved. Come—a little closer—kiss me and set me free!"

Awe seemed to hold the fair face motionless.

"Look!" said Hallam in appeal. "I'm all yours." He pointed to the spear. "There's no shadow between us. I've waited for you. I've obeyed you. I've waited a long time."

"I could not get here before!"

"Hush! What does that matter? You're here, where I am, in this strange meeting-place of death and life, where you came to me first, where I learned to watch for you and love you. Hush! Death and life, what are they? Teach me!"

"Teach you?"

"Teach me what they are, teach me who you are! Kiss me, my dear, kiss me, and let me die, too!"

After a long time, as it seemed to him, she spoke. He could see a deep rose flushing the face of his vision.

"Is that what you want?" she asked solemnly. "That?"

"More than anything-in-life!"

Then Hallam thought he died on the instant of fulfilment when his vision's lips touched his own and he felt them real. Heheard, as he went down into that death, a voice crying above him in an Indian tongue, and it was not his voice.

"Come," cried the voice, "it is life!" The world thundered with that word.

When Hallam woke again, he was lying in the sun beneath a rock. Small saxifrages showed green in the clefts. He heard a sound of water trickling and a chirp of birds. For him these things meant spring.

He raised himself, for he was very weak,

and looked about him.

He could not see the hut, nor the plain enclosing it. He was in the midst of a country snow-covered, but broken into mounds and gentle undulations that seemed beautiful. A little apart, a team of strong dogs rested in the snow. Two men were busy about a sled. The wind was sweet and pleasant. The sun was a resurrection.

Hallam began to shake as he lay. He lifted himself among the furs and called hoarsely. The men by the sled at once turned to him their broad dark faces. Then

they went on with their work.

Across the softening snow he watched her

coming to him.

In that clear sane light he could doubt no longer. This was a living woman, flesh as well as spirit, beautiful, weary, strong. And he knew her—knew every curve of her face, every shade of the deep eyes that watched him with the grave look of his vision.

She stooped above him. Her shadow lay across him. She said softly: "You're better"

Hallam said: "Did my love make you live?"

"I don't understand. . . ."
"Will you tell me," said Hallam, "who you are?"

"I am Moira Maclean, the factor's

that no appeal for help's ever been made in vain. Yours came at a bad hour. But I was there. I'm strong. I took the best dogs and two of our Indians I could trust,



"'Come in, my darling,' Hallam said joyfully."

daughter, from Fort Dismay. Armand Leseur reached the Fort seven weeks ago with the message. We had sickness there. No white man was fit to go to you. There are only five. It's our pride at Fort Dismay and came to find you. But I hardly dared hope I'd reach you in time."
"You came," said Hallam slowly, "you

came!"

"There was no one else. Afraid? I

was afraid all the way I wouldn't reach you in time. Leseur told us of the suffering. . . . I was wild to reach you. But we were delayed again and again. I-couldn't rest. Between sleep and waking, it was as if I

bad, I held you so you should not fall off the

Hallam was silent. Then he said: "Will you tell me-what you thought-what you felt-when you were coming to me?"



slipped off to find you. . . . When we came to the hut, we called, and there was no answer. We thought you were dead. door was barred. We had to pull down the wall of the hut. When I saw you there, I When I saw you there, I was sure we were too late.'

"No," said Hallam, "I waited, as you told me."

She gave him a strange, grave look. "You "I called the men. were—alive," she said. We rested twenty hours. All the time we fed and warmed you, but you did not know. Then we took the papers and records, and came back. You're safe. You're half-way to the Fort. All the time you've slept. It was best for you. When the going was

"I don't know. It was strange. . . . I seemed to hear you calling me. I seemed to try and reach you so hard that—that something-my soul-ran on ahead, to tell you help was near. I'd wake up from sleep, crying, 'Wait for me! I'm coming!'"

"You told me," whispered Hallam, " you came."

Her face was very white. "I came?"

"Time after time," said Hallam gently, "before you came in the body, you came in the spirit. So often I knew you, I waited for you, I loved you. Before ever your dear feet trod the snow at the door, your spirit had trodden a road to mine." voice sank to a breath. "Your soul ran ahead, Moira, your soul ran ahead!"

She began to breathe quickly. "There,

in the hut," she said unsteadily, "you knew me. You—— Oh, I'm afraid! What does it mean?"

He caught her hand in his. "What were

the first words I said to you?"

After a long silence, her answer came. "You asked me—to kiss you—into death."

"What did you think ?"

"You must have mistaken me for someone else."

" Moira, is that true?"

"No," she whispered in a minute.

"No. You knew it was for you. There's

no one else."

She was silent, kneeling in the snow, her hands caught in the fur above her heart. "You knew me," she said presently in a

still voice. "You—loved me. My spirit ran ahead to give yours help. . . . Oh, I'm afraid! What does it mean, this—thing between us two?"

"I don't know the whole meaning," said Hallam; "perhaps I never shall. But I know this. Come nearer to me, Moira—

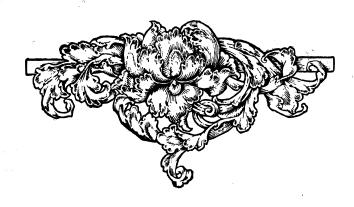
nearer!"

Very slowly she obeyed. He saw the flush on her cheek, the shadow of the lashes, the hollows of weariness, the pattern of the quills embroidered on her hood.

"The rest of it," whispered Hallam,

"The rest of it," whispered Hallam, can wait. This is for now. Kiss me, Moira, my dear love! Kiss me—into life!"

Gently, in the full sunlight, her living lips touched his.



JUNE.

BECAUSE June is so sweet, she so soon goes— Would any have her bide?— Lest from the first perfection of the rose A bloom should fall aside.

Because June is so sweet, she hastens by—Would any have her bound?— Lest in the first glad wonder of the sky A shadow should be found.

Because June is so sweet, all brief her part—Would any bar her way?— Lest from the first contentment of the heart One joyous thought should stray.

DESTINY

By DOUGLAS NEWTON

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GILLETT

HE smart little barouche, with its sleek horses, drew near. The four dark men who had been lounging anyhow amid the trees moved to the edge of the driveway. Haskell wondered why

they were curious.

Then the furthest man began to do things. In his nimble fingers was a twirling thing of rope-rope with weighted balls at each end. Haskell knew what that was. He had seen the South American gauchos bring down their game with the bolas many a time. He became alert just as the weighted thong flashed from the fellow's hand.

At once the off horse was down. thong of the bolas had curled exquisitely round his forelegs. He was down, and in a trice the near horse, under the impulse of the moving carriage and the fall of its pair, was on top of him-a horrible tangle of kicking horses. Even as it fell, the four men

sprang in.

This had been well thought out. sprang at the box seat, dragging the driver and the "tiger" on it to the ground. The driver, a large creature, struggled. A club heaved up and came down hard. The two other men sprang to the carriage itself. Haskell saw the woman standing up, slashing at the nearest of the pair with her absurd parasol—a woman of courage and determination—but by that time he was into the matter himself.

The man on the carriage step, a huge brute, had swept aside, crushed, the parasol, his great arm was about the woman's body. His companion was clumsier and slower, a fattish man. As he panted towards the barouche, he saw Haskell coming. stopped, planted himself, a human Gibraltar, in Haskell's path. His fat hand snatched at his belt, and Haskell saw that what it brought away was a long and cruel

He lunged to where Haskell's heart should have been, and at the same moment experienced the full fervour of Haskell's upper-cut. Haskell was a rolling stone of the world who had not gathered too much moss so far, but the experience had taught him, anyhow, how not to gather other things -such things as knife wounds and dangerous hurts. So he had slipped under that thrust in a brilliant manner, and had hammered his left to the face. As the fat one jerked and staggered, a right with a fist like teak slammed in just where ear and jaw meet. The fat man went down in an unsightly

The man who held the woman had lifted her to the ground, though she struggled. Haskell lost no time with this rogue. This was no moment for niceties. He rammed his foot hard into the scoundrel's spine, grabbed his coat shoulders, and fell backthat was slightly Japanese, that trick. The rogue released the woman, made a single frustrated half-grab, then soared ungracefully through the air to the side-walk. Haskell was up himself at once, ready to fight the other two, but there was no need.

The woman, torn, dishevelled, but completely calm, was standing against the barouche, firing steadily from a wicked little automatic pistol. She probably had no hope of hitting-indeed, even the fat man was up and running-but she did mean to make a noise, and she succeeded. The rogues were scared at the noise, and were bolting. Already in the distance along the driveway people were running towards them. Haskell turned to the woman.

"Hurt?" he asked.
"Annoyed and dirty—no more," she answered. Then she made an exclamation of surprise. She stood staring at Haskell, and Haskell stood and stared at her. The look of bewildered astonishment on both faces was identical.

"So it is you—again?" breathed the A delicate mantling of blood played beneath the vivid ivory of her skin.

"I begin to believe in Fate," said Haskell

shortly.

"Well, it is extraordinary." Her words had a soft inflection, a slurring of "r's" that was foreign, just as the ivory and red of her face and the dark splendour of her

eyes were foreign.

"It's uncanny," agreed Haskell. He heard the "tiger" shout, and looked quickly towards him. The "tiger," no more than a boy, was pale, yet was making timid attempts to show that he was not afraid of the fallen horses. He made little darts at the squirming, lashing mass of hoofs and legs. The driver still lay helpless in the dust of the roadway. Haskell said: "Those horses will kick each other to death, poor brutes." He ran to them.

When, with the help of other men, he had freed the horses, he went back to the woman. She was already seated in a carriage that had been commandeered. About her there was a small crowd. Three foot policemen and one mounted man were being excessively deferential to her. She beckoned Haskell towards her with that queer, thrilling smile of hers.

"Is it all well now?" she asked. Her voice was gentle, but she was as marvel-

lously calm as she always was.

"One of the horses will have to be shot."
"Oh," she said softly, "poor—poor

brute! And the men?"

"The coachman is none the worse for his thwack. The other is merely badly scared."

"I am grateful to you—enormously—and again——"

"It is queer," said Haskell, smiling.

"Yes. And even yet I don't know your

"I don't know yours," said Haskell. She seemed a little surprised. They both looked at each other, wondering, smiling. Then she said—

"And even now—shall we leave it to Fate?"

"Yes, I think we might. It will be interesting to see how it works out—if it does work out any further."

"Oh, but I think it will."

"I have the same feeling. It is au revoir, then."

"Au revoir," she smiled. The people about the carriage fell back. The policemen stood aside. Exquisitely she nodded, smiling at him. Then, at a thought, she snatched at her hand, leaned forward, extended her arm to him. He felt something hard in his palm. . . .

"No, no," he said.

"A token, that is all. Don't think I dare reward you."

She smiled again, and was driven away. Haskell looked at the ring of curious metal. It was of gold and mercury, cast and wrought in a way of which the secret is now lost. There was a strange, green, gleaming jewel in it, of a design he faintly guessed to be Inca workmanship. He looked at it. A policeman at his side said—

"Will monsieur kindly render to me his

name and habitation?"

As Haskell gave the facts, he resented both the necessity and the policeman. Of course an affair like this would mean an inquiry, even publicity. He would, in spite of all, learn her name at last, and she his, and he would rather leave it to Fate.

There was, however, no reason for his resentment. He was never sent for by the police, never asked to attend an inquiry. The thing had been hushed up. The girl had hushed it up. And that only increased the strangeness of the thing, gave to her a sense of power as well as mystery.

Fate—mystery! Yes, those were the words to use in this strange business. What practical reasoning could explain away the destiny that appeared to link him to this exquisite and unknown girl? What force was it that drew together two people so emphatically dissimilar at moments of crisis in their lives and at such strange, outlandish places of the world?

Was it chance, accident? No—emphati-

cally no.

Haskell couldn't possibly admit that. The occurrences were too astonishing, too dramatic. Take that time in Palawan Island. That was too extraordinary to describe as mere chance. The whole circumstance had been too unusual. His hut on the lonely beach-no whites ever went there, few natives even-and he was at the end of things. In all his vagabond days he had never been so near the end of things—sick, penniless, despairing. He had even decided to make an end, had saved just one cartridge to do it, and he hadn't done it. Something had made him hang on, something more powerful than the terrible logic of his circumstances, and yet something without reason in it, too. And then, when he was trying to argue himself into suicide—ridiculous attitude, that she had come.

Absurd of her to be there. Absurd to see any civilised woman there, but this girl more than any. Where had he seen her last?

Buda Pest, hadn't it been? Well, there she was, on one of the last places of the earth, riding a powerful little horse along a bad

trail, and bringing him help.

They had stopped at his hut to get water and fire, and to off-saddle and eat on their journey. They had heard about him from a village back in the bush. He had been sullen about giving the small party water, had left intercourse mainly to his "boy." Then, as he crouched apart, melancholy, staring out across the deep indigo of the sea, she had come up to him, stood by him.

She had stood quietly, slim, flexible, and yet strong in her riding kit, and he had looked at her vital face and seen who it was, and had sprung up, swaying slightly because of a dizziness more than ordinary that had come to him. And she had smiled at him

and said—

"It is you. Well, I felt it. Yes, you must be the reason of my riding."

And he could only stare and sway and

mutter thickly--

"Well . . . how the hell . . . I mean here . . . here . . . such a place as this . . . you . . ." Then his dizziness and his swaying had been too much for him, and as things went dark he heard her calling—

"Doctor, this man is ill—quick, doctor!"

It had been a fortnight before he woke up to the knowledge that she had saved him—this girl without a name. Even then her name remained unknown. The party had left medicines, instructions as to their use for the benefit of the "boy," food. More food was sent back three days after they had ridden away, and with that a note—a note in a queer, strong, beautiful handwriting, saying—

"When you are well, go to Mindoro. Swartz and Co. expect you. They will see

to you."

Nothing more than that, and no signature or initials. And nothing at Mindoro, either. They were expecting him there. Swartz and Co. fitted him out, found him a ship, gave him money, which he accepted as a loan only and sent back when he had earned enough, but of the girl they told nothing. She wished to remain unknown.

She always had remained unknown, though that was—yes, that was the third meeting, that one on Palawan beach.

How strange those meetings! How they had chased each other across the wide surface of the world! Each meeting had been a marvel. How could those two souls,

two specks amid the millions, come together again and again and again, though blanks of years and voids of miles stretched between the meetings? No good saying, "The world's a small place." It wasn't. It was a terribly large place in the large manner in which Haskell used it. To come together in . Palawan, after meeting years earlier in Buda Pest, that was unexpected, uncanny. And the time before that was Soho, London, and the time after Palawan. This affair of the bolas and the knife-bearing scoundrels in Paris—this was the fourth. No, one couldn't call all this chance, coincidence; there was something too definite about it. It was a destiny. It was as though some strange magnetism drew them together from the farthest corners of the earth. They had to meet. There was some tremendous and inexplicable design about it all. They had to meet. She—she was a woman of He-he, he supposed, was a destiny. creature of destiny, too.

Now, as he sat in his Paris lodging, he thought of her more than he had ever thought of her. One forgot her and her strange, exotic, exquisite rareness in the wide years between the meetings. But after each meeting he did think of her more—thought of her with that thrill of delight and of wonder, of tenderness and—yes, of terror—for what did it mean, these strange, linked, and significant meetings? What was

behind it all? What did it portend?

That first meeting in Soho—how vividly he recalled it! He was a cub. Was he sixteen or seventeen? He could not say. All he could say was that he was a cub, and a cub in rebellion. He loathed his clerical work in the Knightrider Street leather ware-He hated the shackles of City routine. He abominated the meek, flat, grey existence he and his father and his brother and sister lived in their villa at Forest Hill. He used to prowl about the streets of the West End of London, tasting the delights of strange lives with his eyes, longing to get away.

He had walked that night—an uncouth little clerk, unsophisticated, ill-dressed, his shoulders and limbs too big for his clothes, and his hunger for wide spaces and wide living too big for his heart—in Soho. He dived into those darkling little streets where the people, the language, and the smells had strange, rare foreign accents. He had plunged blindly through these streets, not noticing where he went, and then he

had seen the girl.

That was nine years ago at least. She was then young, a bud of a girl, her queer, quickening beauty only then unfolding, but she was calm and aloof and yet thrillingly warm even then. She had come out of a door, was standing on the step as he passed, a slim, vivid thing as quick and pliant as a wand. Dark clothes she had on then, workmanlike and neat, but not rich like these Paris clothes.

He went by looking at her, and she looked down at him, and their eyes clung with a strange recognition of each other, not that they had met before, but that they-well, knew this meeting to be exactly right. It was to Haskell as though this thing was bound to happen, was part of a definite scheme. He looked at her and saw how beautiful she was, and something happened in his chest—as though someone had upset a basin of very warm water there, and it was flooding through the whole of his body slowly, glowingly. Her lips parted, and her look became more intent. After only the barest hesitation she called out in a voice more soft and slow and foreign then than now-

"Oh, Englishman, will you to come here?" He knew enough to feel a callow terror, a shrinking away, when foreign women in that West End quarter called to him softly. Sometimes that happened; his squareblocked, deeply-gouged face had a strength and an attraction. Now he went straight up to her.

She looked along the street, right and left. "Will you come inside—and help?" she

asked.

He went inside.

In the room, off the canyon of a smelly hall, was a man—a huge man, deep and thick, but not fat, and he was sprawling in a chair in a limp, loosened-up style. He was a man of singular, dark, foreign style. Haskell could not name his race, but then he was incapable of naming more than half a dozen races in those days. He was darker, more barbaric than the girl, of different clay, one might have said, but there was something intangible yet sure in his face that proclaimed a relationship. An uncle at least—her father, perhaps.

Haskell's unskilled eyes passed over the sprawled figure, his unknowing tongue

said-

"Drunk!"

"He is dying," said the girl softly.
"A doctor!" cried the startled Haskell. "I'll run for a doctor!"

" No," said the girl slowly. " I want you to help me get him away. He will be able to walk a little." She spoke close up to the ear of the sprawled man in a strange, smooth tongue. He did not seem to hear, but his head nodded in comatose assent. "Yes, he will walk as much as we want. You take his arm.'

"But—dying!" blurted Haskell. "I say

-better get a doctor."

"It is no good. He will die." Haskell stared at her. "He has been killed-

poisoned! There is no hope."

Haskell gasped again. He knew horror and shock. The little clerk in him wanted The new something in him, the something that thrilled at the strangeness of all this, at the rare, alluring quality of the girl, was determined to see this through. He went to the man, and with his young and considerable strength he levered him to his feet, the big man, with an effort that brought sweat in streams to his temples, helping. They all went sidling across the room. At the canyon of a hall the girl turned him away from the hall door. He said something.
"No, this way," she whispered. "Not

that way. There are peoples—they must not get him-they must not take him!"

Again Haskell, the little clerk, knew terror. Who were these "peoples"? Why must they not "get" the big man? Were they the police, and did it mean imprisonment for him? Or were they more terrible still-connected with the killing of this man, poisoners, murderers, who might not hesitate to murder him? His heart went sick and watery, and he determined to go through with it. Whatever happened, he

would go through with it.

Nothing happened. He never found out what had happened. The strange trio, the staggering and dying man in the midst, passed to the back of the house. At the back of the house was a tiny yard littered with packing-cases and curious alien débris. There was a door in the wall of this. They went through it into a mews. They propped the big man against a wall of the empty mews, and the girl went out through the gateway, away from him into the street. Haskell stayed for a terrifying eternity, holding the big man against the wall. big man did not utter a sound. Haskell did not speak. He simply stood, wondering what -who might come out of the house, when a policeman might dodge down the dark mews. He waited, holding the man, who did not even groan.

The girl came back. Between them they got the man out of the niews. In the street outside there was a four-wheeler cab, with a cynical driver on the box. He had already been told his destination and what was expected of him, for he sat calmly, smiling slightly down at them like a satiated Buddha, while they got the big man into the cab. "What now?" thought Haskell. But there was nothing now.

The girl caught his hand, pressed it with two that were long and fine and small and

very delicate, and she said-

"Sank you! Sank you! Sank you!" She got into the cab, and it drove off. That was all and the end. Never another word about the matter did he learn, though he searched the papers for the next week.

In a month he had run away from England, had started on his wanderings. Perhaps it was the girl and the emotion of that strange happening in Soho that had brought his rebellion to a head, but in any case he soon forgot all about the girl. At first she was a glowing memory, fragrant, thrilling, and exotic, but soon she became only a queer one. Hard work, hard conditions, and a hard struggle to keep alive at all, soon knocked sentiment out of him.

In the years that stretched from his daring escape from the humdrum in the Canada boat from the Surrey Commercial Docks, he had done many things. He had deserted at Quebec, helped to spike rails to ties in Grank Trunk construction, he had taken part in a town "boom" in Alberta, and had lived afterwards at the rate of six million a year for three weeks. He had worked a donkey-engine in a logger camp, and had shipped on a tramp to the Andes coast. He had shovelled saltpetre, and taken part in a one-horse rebellion. Loot from that had carried him, via the China Seas, to Madras, and a stroke of luck had lifted him through Suez to Eastern Europe. the Balkans he was neither clerk, nor deck-hand, nor scallywag, but a financier dabbling in oil.

What changes there had been in those short years! How he had filled them! There was no room for memory of the girl, yet in Buda Pest he met her again.

That was a strange meeting. He recalled it vividly because—well, because of its queer sense of having been arranged, of being a part of destiny. Bates, the man with him,

did not want to go to the gaming-house. Haskell, earlier in the day, had not wanted to go, either. They had, in fact, arranged a trip up the river to the gardens of Margaret Island; there was a fete of some sort on, and they meant to enjoy it. Then, just as he was dressing for dinner, the desire to go somewhere and gamble, gamble boldly, began to take hold of him. There was no explaining the craving, and the way it grew upon him during dinner was extraordinary. How angry Bates had been! Only the fact that they had agreed to go their own ways had saved a quarrel.

Bates went up the Danube to the gardens. Haskell crossed the bridge into Buda, climbed towards the citadel, and soon found a tout who took him to the gaming-house. That was how indefinite the whole thing was. Haskell had no idea of where he was going to play. He left it to luck and to meeting a chance tout. And he met such a fellow, and was taken to that rococo but fusty room on the second floor of a dark discreet house. . . .

And there was the girl.

She stared straight at him as he came into that queer room, with its strange mingling of evening-dress, Hungarian, and Magyar costumes. It was as though she had expected—anyhow, someone. Her deep and dark eyes were fixed on his, blankly at first, then into them a sort of baffled recognition crept. She didn't quite know him; only something within her told her that he was the man she expected—that is, if she had really expected anything definite.

For himself, he wondered why he wasn't surprised. Vague about his actions up to this moment, he yet felt that this was the reason for his being here. He had half recognised her at once, but then his memory of her was more poignant than hers of him. Full recognition leapt upon him directly he saw the growing light of—of hope in her eyes. She had looked at him like that before, in Soho; it was a recognition of his capacity to help her.

He saw that she was well dressed, but in clothes that had lost their freshness and beauty. They were neat as ever, but showed signs of stress. So did her face, though it had developed in its strange and mystical exquisiteness. She looked, not merely as if she had suffered, but as if at this moment she was touching the deeps of despair; there was a tragic, final, all-isover air sitting upon her queenly head and her slim, strong figure. Standing over her

was a tall and very spare man, with features saturnine and yet complacently sneering. He seemed to be the embodiment of her tragic air, and he was looking at her with a glance of cynical triumph.

Haskell and the girl exchanged a glance that leaped across the years and seemed to compel them in its flash to recognise their strange predetermined affinity. Then the girl looked down at the baize of the gamingtable. It seemed to be the natural thing for Haskell to put himself by her side.

At that moment the croupier called out something, and he heard the girl exclaim

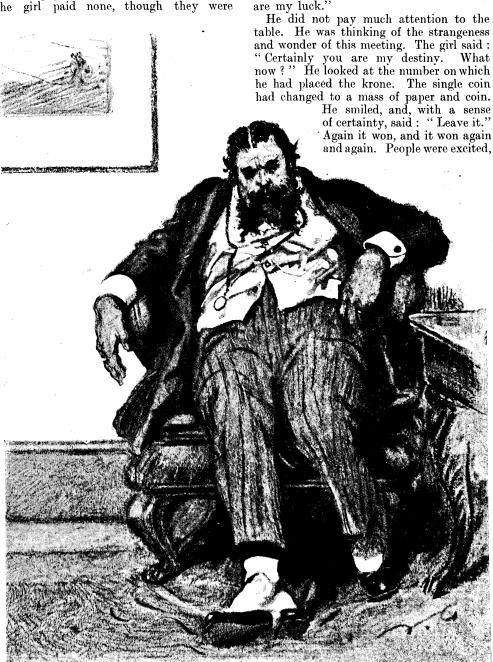


"Haskell's unskilled eyes passed over the sprawled figure, his unknowing

bitterly, and her narrow and reticent hands made a slight despairing gesture. A voice said: "So! Your last krone! Nothing for it but me and marriage."

It was the tall man speaking. Haskell did not pay much attention to the words; the girl paid none, though they were addressed to her. She was looking at Haskell, he at her. He slipped a gold krone from his pocket, held it to her. "It will change your luck," he said, smiling.
"Place it," she smiled back, her voice

as soft as before, but fuller. "It is you who



tongue said-'Drunk!' 'He is dying,' said the girl softly."

looking at them, following their lead. The croupier was glancing at them queerly. Behind them the unconsidered fellow with the saturnine face was fidgeting, showing

anger. Again they won.

At once, and with that strange air of decision, Haskell thrust forward, scooped all the winnings to them, and did not bet again. At the next turn of the wheel the run on the number broke. But for his action, they would have lost all. Only he was not noticing.

"I wanted seven thousand two hundred krone," said the girl. She had not followed the play, but something within her told her

she had reached that figure.

Haskell said: "It is seven thousand two hundred and eighty."

The man behind made an exclamation of anger. "It is magic," he snarled.

"It is what I wanted," said the girl. "It

is you again—Englishman!"

When the tall man said he would escort her home, she said "No," and Haskell and she walked out of the place—she needed protection in that wild and bizarre city. Well away from the place they found a cab, and she got into it, and she said, as Haskell hesitated: "Tell him to the Quays." It was only when the cab was out of sight that he realised they had talked scarcely at all, and that again he did not know her name.

Nor did he find her name or her. Next day he strolled on the Quays, perhaps on the chance of meeting her, but he met the tall, saturnine fellow instead. The tall man was angry. He demanded explanations. "Where has she gone?" he almost shouted

"Where has she gone?" he almost shouted.
"She—who?" demanded Haskell.

"You know who—you who helped her to get the very thing she wanted, that money, the very thing that kept her away from me. Where has she gone? She has left Buda Pest—left this morning, and nobody knows her destination."

Haskell stared at him, answered lamely. In the midst of his answer the other turned,

and he, too, went completely away.

That was the strange thing about these meetings. They came with the inevitability of destiny. Worlds and multitudes could not keep them apart when they needed each other, when some fore-ordained end was to be accomplished, and yet they did not speak their names. That was queer and strange. That was what had happened at Palawan, that was what had happened in

this—the fourth—meeting in Paris. They were bound up in each other by some strange, mystical skein of destiny, and yet they did not know each other. And they made no attempt to know each other. As she had said on that day when the scallywags had attacked her with bolas and knife: "Leave it to Fate." Fate! Yes, somehow they felt that it was Fate itself that played with their lives, and was not yet finished with its queer game.

Who she was, Haskell could not even begin to know. Someone rather exalted. he thought. Apart from the way in which she hushed up this Paris fracas, there was her manner. She had an effect, there was about her an atmosphere of distinction. One could say of her, without being banal, that she had a queenly air. Of her curious, spiritual, and yet firm beauty there could be no doubt, and it was more than the glowing perfection of her ivory face, with its vital lips and the dark and spiritual Her tenderness and courage, her aplomb and her womanliness, gave her a superb femininity. She appealed to the soul and she played the deuce with the heart.

For days Haskell thought of her, wondered about her, glowed with the idea of her, and wondered—wondered when that next meeting would come—he felt it must. But slowly time and affairs, not obliterated, but overlaid the memory of her. Haskell had come to Paris on big business, and the

bigness of it soon mastered him.

He was at work then on his Parguaza Concessions. Parguaza was to be the rich crown of his strenuous and adventurous life. Parguaza, as he knew it, was an independent province set deep in the heart of a great South American Republic. As a land it was both desirable and detestable. It was astonishingly rich in minerals and metals, in timber, in rubber and other things. It was

also astonishingly degenerate.

That was its detestable quality. One time it had been quite a vigorous little community. The great Portuguese gentleman and captain who had founded a queer dynasty there had begot a house which had ruled over his colony with capacity and firmness. It had been prosperous under its quaint little kings. When the universal emotion of revolution caught it, it began to decline. Its prosperity was evicted with the royal Joaquims, and, instead of affluence, revolutions took first place in national industry.

Revolutions were the only regular crop.

They were mainly party revolutions, one branch of liberty-lovers revolting against another mainly on the principle that it was time they held office and had a chance at the pickings. The last "royal" attempt had occurreed fiften years before, when Pedro XII. had won and reigned for eighteen months, and had been turned off his throne again, and had disappeared into oblivion.

Haskell had seen Parguaza and assessed its worth. He saw that a firm man with a strong will, and a supply of machine and other guns to back it, might do a great deal with certain tracts of the wasted land. had cultivated the society of many of the old landowners, and had bought up a solid area for a song. As things stood, that land was not worth more than a song, for in the general and widespread deterioration caused by a chronic condition of revolution, it seemed that even if one could grapple with the giant task of clearing and planting country which the ever-avid jungle had overrun, even if one ever opened up the mining possibilities, a man might despair before the slack, loose, mañana attitude of the authorities and the people. Even if the government, or some succeeding government. did not prove hostile, the natural and human difficulties made such things as labour, transport, and so on immensely difficult.

Haskell was not the despairing sort. He thought Parguaza was a land he might handle. During the two years following the Paris incident he worked hard collecting funds and workers—and fighters—for that end. At the close of the third year the Parguaza Concessions were in being. Haskell's own line of three small but armed tramps were connecting the district with the Great River and the ocean, and his community of workers—British, American, French, Italian, and West Indian negroes—had already dominated and got to work on an area of country that made quite a third of the province of Parguaza.

By the middle of the next year the position of Haskell was so strong that he was able to send word to a would-be liberator that though he personally did not wish to play spoil-sport in the matter of national pastimes, and though he had the very lowest opinion of the honesty and capacity of the President in power, he objected to "revoluting" on business grounds. Unless the said liberator could manage his revolt in such a way as not to interfere with the production of the Parguaza Concessions, he (Haskell) would

feel it his duty to muster his machine-guns for the purpose of producing a definite commercial equilibrium in the Republic of Parguaza.

83

There was no revolution.

The cheery scoundrel who was President in power sent an effusive letter to Haskell: "My ally, and the friend and supporter of law, equity, and order . . ." months later, his greedy mind turned by the almost shocking prosperity of Haskell's venture, the old rogue placed before his Senate a fiscal Bill framed with no other intention than that of plundering the Concession of three-fourths of its profits. Haskell had a draft of the Bill in his hand even as it underwent its first reading. He grinned. His typist took down a letter which expressed Haskell's complete abhorrence of the Bill, and mentioned the fact that Haskell's fleet of steamers—now increased to five—had lately been mounted with 3-inch guns of excellent pattern, and that the capital, and particularly the Senate House, the President's palace, and the residential quarter of the Government, were peculiarly ${f fitted}$ to act as targets . . .

The Bill died an unnatural death in Committee.

Haskell grinned again, and went on and prospered. He smiled as he heard himself referred to as "The Dictator" or as "The Uncrowned King of Parguaza." That was all to the good. It secured him in his work, which was all he cared about. He was just about the top of his power when the great revolution came.

It came from the outside, so that no early rumour of it had reached him. He scowled at the first flash of the news, put out his fighting chin, and sent out a general S.O.S. over his vast estates for the machine-guns and the rifles and the gun-crews of the ships to "Stand by." He waited. He heard rumours of the success of the revolutionaries, and then had word from a vague Indian in a canoe that the revolt was a Royal one. The House of Joaquim had come back with all the powers of a European-built plan.

Haskell's scowl cleared a little. He pointed out to his council of managers—they and every man on the Concession worked on the partnership principle—that this might be a good thing. The record of these Joaquims showed them to be a level-headed lot. They had ruled with steadiness, justice, and wisdom, and had fully understood the value of commercial integrity.

The last of them (Pedro XII.) had done more in his short reign to stabilise things than all the revolutionaries put together. He had even tried to put the State back on its old foundation of working prosperity before he had gone under to liberty with langour. Yes, these Royals might be a good thing; they might keep the country sane and steady.

His words were supported by a message—it was too sketchy to be called a dispatch—from someone who signed himself Minister of the Interior to the House of Joaquim. It stated that the reigning House was determined to support, rather than disturb, such work as Señor Haskell was so superbly accomplishing. The reigning House had its eyes open to the good accruing to Parguaza through foreign energy and capital. Señor Haskell was to be assured of the friendliness and, indeed, the co-operation of the House of Joaquim, and was not to be alarmed at the course of the Royalist success.

That, declared Haskell, was the old Joaquim spirit speaking. It was satisfactory. When one of Haskell's skippers came up the river, the Concession felt happy. "It's all bueno," said the captain. "This new lot is for us. They let me through the capital without a jar. A business-like lot they are, too. P'r'aps too business-like for the first days. The Scotsman and the Californian who are running the Harbour and Customs for the Government are rather disturbing to the old mañana-ists. But they'll shake down."

"If they can hold the whip hand," said Haskell. "Strength is the only thing that counts in Parguaza. How did they strike

you?"

"Well, they do seem to have a grip of the capital. The Administration is, as I say, pretty tight and well thought out. There's discontent among the idlers and the something-for-nothings, of course...But—I was fired on by some bright fellows in that rough district in the Yapura area. Quite a lot of bad-hats there."

"Wonder whether he can clear them

out?"

"Sure thing, if the same drive is shown

as is shown in the capital."

"And if he's got the fighting force to do it. If he can make himself felt for three months, he should hold the land."

"I say, you keep on saying 'he,' " said

the captain.

"He—the new King, this Joaquim fellow, I mean."

"It's a she," laughed the captain "Thereza Maria Margaretha Inez San Joaquim-Joaquim, Queen of Parguaza."

Haskell stared at him, his mouth suddenly dry, his heart suddenly thrilled, that strange, glowing sensation, as of a bowl of warm water upset in his chest, flooding through his body. He had a sense of definity, of destiny.

In six weeks he was steaming to save her

-save her again.

* * * * *

The crash had come. It had come in the usual way in these parts. She, this Joaquim queen, had been making headway, gaining popularity; it looked as though she would make good. Then an earnest fellow had wiped out half her Administration with a bomb, and her only general was included in that slaughter. From that moment the counter-revolution had flamed up, not because the State was against her, but because its more active males enjoyed revolutions. Now she was pinned in the Administrative quarter of her capital, with a happy mob of murderers doing their best to break in and get her, while the rest of the country slowly drifted into anarchy as it sat and waited to see which way the cat would jump.

Haskell, fed up with anarchy, thrilled by the curious feeling that this girl was—was the girl, was pushing down river on a wellarmed tramp, determined to settle the politics of this rough-house republic once

and for all.

He had spent a queer six weeks since the time he had learnt that the new ruler in Parguaza was a queen, was a woman. He had felt at once the thrill of destined things; he had waited on the alert all that time-for the fulfilment of something that must come. When the news of her danger arrived, he

knew that this was the thing.

Standing on the bridge of his vessel, he saw the shine of spires in the distant sun—the capital. He saw stretched away on the right bank of the river the uncouth masses of the rebels; nearer were his own forces, the cavalry swinging right out there under the hills, his infantry bedraggled, but still in some order, even now in touch. He saw the sparkle of firing, and heard the rattle of those excellent machine-guns. Bates, who handled that army, knew his job. Why—why, he was already threatening to envelop the clumsy enemy mass with his horsemen!

Thrilling, all this. He had been astonished at the way, not merely his Concession district, but all the neighbourhood had flocked to his side when he had begun to move to her help. He had made an impression on the country, he was popular. His firmness, the prosperity he had brought, meant something, after all—he was a real Dictator. It was queer. A third of Parguaza was already talking about him as President, and a third—many of them rather passive—wanted the old Joaquims to reign, and the rest, when they had had the fight knocked out of them, they would plump for the strongest hand. A queer situation. He was part a President, and she—she was part a Queen.

An absurd black-powder gun began to bump off from the mud-pile that was supposed to be the river fort of the capital. His own forward 3-inch snapped and snapped and snapped. Shrapnel bloomed all over the crazy fort. The defence gun bumped off twice more, then it stopped, and wild flags of truce fluttered in a crop. That was their idea of a fight. How idiotic it all was! The buildings along the quayside began to spit and snap with rifle-Half a dozen bursts shooting. that was machine-guns, and finished. The army of the Republic was Through his glasses he could see the plain outside the city streaming with fleeing men, and Bates's horsemen were swinging in in great style. They'd round up the lot. The vessel nosed and slid along the quay. Even before they tied up, his men were overside, were moving up the great Avenida Centrale to where barricades and gouts of smoke showed the Republicans firing on the Queen's defences. As his men went, their machine-guns and rifles crackled busily. The 3-inch on the bow began to spray the barricades with shrapnel. And then everybody was running.

They yelled *Vivas* at him as he went up the Avenida, through the litter of the barricades, to the palace—they threw away their rifles to do it. He smiled grimly. What a game it all was! He was President by acclamation -would be by election, too-and he was going to the girl who was Queen. Absurd and strange, and yet foreordained. He saw how it all led up to this—all of it. And he'd figured in all of it.

That huge old man in Soho, he had been her father, the last King—Pedro Grosse, they had called him; that fitted his size. His enemies had got him out of the way, poisoned him. In Buda Pest she had gambled for money—why? Why, to prepare a revolution. That tall, sinister fellow—perhaps he wanted to be a king. He said she would have to come to him; he looked as though he had money and ambition. . . . Palawan . . . that was easy. He knew the name of her general who had been killed by that bomb. He was a celebrated half-breed fighter who had given the Americans no end of trouble in Palawan and the Philippines generally. She had been preparing, building up her plot to restore her crown. Paris was the easiest of the lot. Her plot was well on the way to perfection then. The ruling powers in Parguaza had sent those cut-throats to remove her—and the danger she stood for. He found out afterwards that all these speculations were right.

They were "Viva-ing" him at the barricades, but at the palace they were silent, They scowled at him, though he had rescued them. They didn't like the Vivas; they were staunch for the Queen. She had a following—well, he knew she had

a following.

She stood waiting for him, smiling, more regal than he had known her, but more beautiful, too—a wonderful woman. And she expected him.

"Again," she said. "This, then, is what

Fate had in hand."

"Yes, this seems to be it. You and I were destined from the beginning to come

together in Parguaza, it seems."
"Yes," she smiled. "But—is that all you think?" He thought her colour was heightened. She looked so gracious, so desirable.

"I'm trying to think. Fate may have further business with us, but—well, it is a tangled situation."

"Tangled!" She laughed at him.

"Well, listen to that shouting. Thosethose bright patriots are electing me President.

"And you saw my people scowlingthey are determined I shall be their Queen. And there are others. . . . "

" I know—I know. A great number of the stable people are with you. Why didn't

they support you in this?"

"I am a woman alone. They were not certain whether a woman alone had the strength to carry things through. waited.'

'Ah!" he said, and suddenly he breathed rapidly. " If—if there was only a king----"

She looked at him straight, her eyes bright, her cheeks glowing.

"There is," she said; "there is an uncrowned king."

He strode up to her. He took her

"You think it is that—that—that this queer destiny means that?"

"I know it is that." she said softly. "I

know in my mind, in my soul, and in my heart it is that."

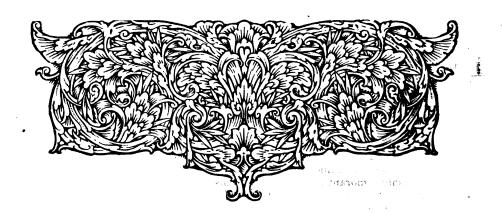
" Parguaza is our destiny," he said.

"No, you and I are the destiny of Parguaza.

He caught her to him.

"Should one-how does one kiss a queen ? "

"As one kisses a woman," she answered.



LILAC.

OVERS love roses, Saints love white lilies, And children in Springtime Love daffies and gillies.

Child, saint, nor lover, I'm none of those three: And it's lilac-prim lilac-Holds magic for me-

Long-ago Maytimes, Boughs mauve and white; Babyhood playtimes, Birthday delight:

Nothing to sing of, And little to tell: Those dear days-those queer days When all could go well!

ELAINE NICHOLSON.

LIBERAL EDUCATION

By CHARLES SIDDLE

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT BAILEY

SUPPOSE I am growing old. Certainly the modern version of what we used to call "Love's young dream" in our songs and poems leaves me gasping with mingled astonishment and displeasure. For all its hopes and fears, thrills and heartbreaks, love was a simple matter when I was young. We had no thought for complications, eugenics, or any other of the modern crazes. Probably we were dangerously reckless and childishly ignorant; indeed, for his mother. "At the end, when all the all my grey hairs, I am still ignorant, if documents were signed and the business David Correns and Beatrice Malvern are to completed, David glared through his eyebe taken as examples of modern methods. Let me tell you the story of their meeting and the peculiarly crab-like motion of their romance. I suppose it comes to the same thing in the end, but the method, the method!

I will admit frankly, here in the very beginning, that all the old properties are used—the unexpected legacy, the wealthy young man, the hard-working young heroine facing a life of poverty. It really happened so in this case, which only marks the contrast between what one would expect of the principals and what they actually did. For example, when David Correns, living with his mother in furnished rooms and scraping along on about three pounds per week, received a letter from a firm of lawyers informing him that he was the sole legatee of Emmanuel Bray, a distant relative now conveniently deceased, his only comment, as I have often heard his mother relate, was: "One never realises how clumsy an instrument the English language can be until one reads a business letter." Having contributed this weighty and quite irrelevant comment, he threw the letter across to his mother and departed for the reference library and the serious business of life.

The weeks which followed were very

trying for both—for Mrs. Correns because she had to shepherd David to every interview almost by force, and for David because constant demands were made upon him to sacrifice hours dedicated to the study of some "ism" or other connected with biology to the comparatively ludicrous trifle of taking over seventy-five thousand pounds' worth of securities and the Manor House at Chelbridge. Once more I quote glasses at poor Mr. Wickford and said: Do you do this kind of thing often?' 'What kind of thing?' 'Oh, poking among ridiculous deeds.' Mr. W abstracts Mr. Wickford smiled pityingly. 'It is my profession, Mr. Correns.' Whereupon David reached for his hat, stood up, and with great sincerity and warmth said, 'Then Heaven help you! 'and walked out."

Mrs. Correns gave me these details one day when we were sitting in the drawing-room at the Manor House, and I had no difficulty in accepting them. None whatever! I had just had the pleasure of meeting Mr. David, and the memory of that shocking experience remained with me to lend credibility to an otherwise incredible narra-David Correns may have been a brilliant student, but when I met him first he was badly in need of a thrashing. Picture me walking up to him, a perfect stranger, holding out the hand of welcome to a newcomer, and ready to be a father to him-or, at any rate, to introduce him to our local society-and then imagine my horror when I heard him distinctly marmur to himself: "Retired list; old school, I Put him down golf, whist, should sav. scandal. Probably fiery temper." All this without the glimmer of a smile. Then quite

calmly he said, "How do you do, Major? Glad to meet you," and walked out of the room again, leaving me suspended, as it were, on a top note of stupefaction. Before I had recovered sufficiently to be angry, Mrs. Correns was telling me all about David's absentmindedness and his distressing inability to think quietly.

I hope I know how to act in the presence of a lady—and, mind you, I like Mrs. Correns and admire her-but if Mr. David had been alone with me in some quiet spot, for all my sixty odd years, I'd have underlined that "probably fiery temper" for him. However, Mrs. Correns was his mother, and I could see how distressed she felt, so I smiled and tried to hide my disgust. Perhaps it was fellow-feeling-at least, that would explain why I found myself telling her about my own trouble with Trixie. The circumstances weren't exactly parallel, but somehow we seemed to understand each other, and I found Mrs. Correns sympathising with my point of view. She, too, is of the old school.

Beatrice Malvern-Trixie, as she has always been to me—is the daughter of an old comrade of mine, and my ward. She is twenty-one years of age, and, for some confounded, mad-brained reason, determined to live her own life in her own way. What she means by that, apparently, is to make me as miserable as she can. She says that if I would only be reasonable and understand that this is the twentieth century, there need be no misery at all. I say that if she weren't absolutely crazy, she wouldn't dream of leaving a comfortable home and an old man who has no one else to live for, merely to satisfy a diseased notion she calls independence! I never heard such nonsense. All the same, I knew that Trixie would carry her point. Very soon now I should be driven to surrender, and watch her go to London to join the great army of professional women. My weak point is that my pension dies with me, and the little I can hope to save will not provide luxuries for Trixie; but I hate to think of my little girl all alone in the big city. I offered to leave Chelbridge and take a flat in Town, but Trixie just laughed at me, teasing and taunting me with my oldfashioned notions.

Mrs. Correns didn't do that. We had a very pleasant talk together, and she questioned me about Trixie until even my dull brain began to suspect her idea. Nothing definite was said, of course, but

when I rose to end my long visit, Mrs. Correns made a remark which might or might not have been capable of translation into a hint.

"Young people are very disturbing," she said, with a sigh. "Really, the ideas they get! I sometimes think we waste our time when we try to understand them. Perhaps—who knows?—the only cure for the folly of youth is experience of and contact with—other youth!"

I walked home with that thought in my Trixie was very obstinate and paid no attention to my advice; David-well, David was an impossible creature, and neglected the example of the best of mothers. What would happen if these two obstinate, self-opinionated children came into contact and possible antagonism? The speculation was interesting, for they were alike, yet very different. I had just decided that the result would be astonishing, when I met Trixie, walking along with her head held high and her cheeks burning. She was so angry that she didn't see me at all for quite a long time, but when she did manage to realise my existence, I found an answer to my speculation. The young people had met, and the result—to me, at least, with my old-fashioned ideas of courtesy and deference to the other sex — was amazing and thoroughly discreditable.

It seems that Trixie had been walking along outside the Manor House walls, and came upon David Correns kneeling on the grass beside the road, watching with such intentness some tiny drama of natural life that her approach merely roused him to the effort of making an urgent sign for silence and delay. Trixie had no idea at the time who the strange man could be, or what he was doing, but the signal was so definite and his absorption so evident that she stopped, hesitated for a moment, and then stepped on to the grass and waited patiently for permission to proceed. She tells me she waited quite ten minutes probably longer—and still David made no sign that he remembered her. At last Trixie's patience gave way under the strain of mingled curiosity and exasperation. In quite a small voice she asked: "Please, may I go on now?" David must have heard, but he merely shook his head. This was too much for Trixie—she is not accustomed to being ignored. With defiant disregard she stepped back on to the road and continued her progress, making no attempt to avoid noise. Then at last David

was dragged out of his abstraction. He stood up suddenly, with an exclamation of keen disappointment and annoyance, looked round casually, and then said distinctly: "Oh, Heavens, this place is swarming with women!"

I was indignant myself. Whatever the provocation—and I don't admit any in this instance—that is not the way to greet a lady.

"Undoubtedly you had every right to be annoyed," I said.

"Annoyed! I was furious! The man



"'He looked at me for the first time and said: "Pretty girl-immature, though-questionably intelligent."

And then he walked away."

"I was so astonished," said Trixie, "that I just stood still and gaped at him. How was I to know he'd been watching something, and that I had frightened it away ? ".

hadn't even looked at me properly. I guessed whom he must be, and I wasn't going to stand that sort of thing. I looked at him-like that-and 'I think you are abominably rude,' I said."

My annoyance became tinged with uneasiness. The worst of these young folk is, you cannot trust them to deal with a situation adequately.

"I think you were wrong there, Trixie," I said. "It would have been more dignified to say nothing. Anything necessary to be said could have been said by me, as your

guardian, or-"

"Oh, you needn't worry, darling," said 'Mr. David Correns wasn't thinking Trixie. ' of dignity, and he wasn't a bit annoyed. could forgive him if he had been. He just looked at me and said: "Oh, I think you exaggerate. There was no personal application in my remark, and I was unaware that I had thought it aloud. I beg your pardon!'" Trixie paused a moment, then hurried on angrily: "That was all very well, but the very next moment he looked at me for the first time and said: 'Pretty girl-immature, though-questionably intelligent.' And then he walked away.

This was terrible! Evidently that habit of thumb-nail sketching in an unconscious audibility was a fixed habit with the newcomer. I had suffered under it, and now Trixie. I made a feeble attempt at an

excuse, but I was not very convincing.
"You know, Trixie," I said, "the fellow really doesn't know that he says these

things audibly."

Trixie, walking on with quick strides,

treated my attempt as it deserved.

"Well, and what does that matter?" she asked. "He thinks them. Immature! Questionably intelligent! I'd like to shake

him! Conceited young prig!"
Thinking of the "golf, whist, and scandal" remark, I found myself for once thoroughly in agreement with my ward. The fellow had no right to think such things. If he didn't think them, he wouldn't say them.

"Never mind, Trixie," I said consolingly.

"We needn't see much of him."

There was silence for a few moments,

then Trixie spoke again.

"We needn't," she said, "but we will. You watch." And that was all she would say on the subject.

From that hour began the most troublesome and disturbed experience of my life. I mustn't blame David altogether—in fairness, the admission must be made that Trixie was, if anything, slightly ahead of him in sheer brutality. The whole affair was incredibly grotesque and—and distressing. I said so to Mrs. Correns, but,

to my astonishment, she was comparatively

"What I can't understand," I said helplessly, "is why, if they detest each other so much, they don't keep apart and let other people get some pleasure out of companionship and—and quiet, courteous discussion. They seem to go out of their way to sling insults at each other.'

Mrs. Correns nodded.

"You are quite right," she said--" they

I moved restlessly in my chair. "When I was young," I said irritably, "a young man who said the things David says to a lady would have been horsewhipped—yes, madam, horsewhipped! "hadde Mrs. Correns flushed a little.

"But then, Major," she said firmly, "when you were young, no young lady would have replied as Trixie does."

She had me there.

"Madam," I said, "I beg your pardon. I was wrong to attempt to judge your son by my standards, but, believe me, I never for one moment thought of you acting as my ward does. It would be impossible!"

Mrs. Correns acknowledged my apology by a very pretty inclination of her head, and then quite suddenly she threw a

question at me.

"Has your ward spoken lately of her plans about London and independence?"

I stared, not catching the drift of the remark.

"Why, no-not for over a week!"

Mrs. Correns leaned forward with a smile of what I could almost have called triumph.

"No," she said, "and David is neglecting his study of the Miocene Period. paused for a moment to let the point sink in, and then she leaned back in her chair. "We don't understand them, Major," she said, "but we can at least leave them to fight it out."

"But surely," I cried, "you don't

"I don't think anything, dear Major, but this I do know: whereas my son refused to surrender two hours to the business of the legacy, he has surrendered seven days to this quarrel."

I went away thoughtful. I was ready to accept almost anything from Mrs. Correns, but in this case, if she expected me to believe that I was looking on at a dawning love-well, I wasn't having any. The thing was absurd. I will confess candidly that

I have heard David Correns saying things to my ward that I would not have accepted from any man, if Trixie had not always forestalled my protest by a vigorous attack which left me nothing to say. And then the subjects they discussed! Ridiculous subjects. I remember in '80, when I was about David's age, I spent most of my leisure with the prettiest Miss D'Aubigny at Aldershot, and we had only one subject in all those months—ourselves. A very good and a very proper subject for lovers, But David and Trixie apparently considered the regeneration of the franchise, the reconstruction of established religions, and the relations of the sexes not only interesting, but actually of more importance than anything else in life. They expected me to think so too, confound them! First one and then the other would come bursting in on me with a conundrum demanding instant satisfaction. "Didn't I agree that if women had the power in their own hands, they'd reform the country within a year?" This from Trixie, who is normally as sensible a girl as you'd find anywhere. She was quite excited about it, too. Seemed to think I ought to say "Yes" right off and mean it, the only reason being, as far as I could understand the matter, that David had said "the administrative ability of the whole female sex would find comfortable accommodation in a pin-head." As a sound Conservative I agree with David, but as a sane man I know better than to breathe a word about it to an excited girl. But that was the kind of thing they slung at me promiscuously at any odd moment. There was one particularly trying morning with Trixie, who, for some ridiculous reason, wanted to know all about what I think she called protective differentiation and the theory of metabolism. Probably it wasn't just those things, but something like them--I don't pretend to understand the lingo. Whatever they were, she was sure I ought to know something about them until I betrayed the fact that I thought they were both something to do with politics, and then she abandoned me. That was the kind of life I led, and I don't think I can be blamed for losing my temper, and wishing the whole ridiculous affair would fizzle out and leave me in peace. And on the same afternoon David Correns woke me up from an exhausted slumber to ask me if I didn't think far too much attention was paid to surface courtesies and not enough to sincerity. I had him there, though.

"Not by you," I said irritably. "I'm sleepy. Go away."

He looked at me in a startled kind of way. "You don't think I am ever willingly discourteous, do you?" he asked, with obvious sincerity. "Miss Malvern has been saying something like that only this morning. I don't understand it."

I sat up, full of virtuous information.

"Look here, David," I said, "it isn't any good you wandering around asking silly questions. There are more things you don't understand than any farm labourer would admit to. You and your metabolism! Where's Trixie?"

"I fancy she is playing tennis with young Pascoe," he said. He looked hesitatingly at me for a moment, and then that ridiculous habit of audible thumb-nail sketching got him again: "Beefy youth, with vacuous eyes and no chin."

Mindful of my talk with Mrs. Correns, and being by now thoroughly tired of the whole matter, I administered a severe shock to Mr. David, hoping for the best in two directions.

." The beefy youth with the vacuous eyes and no chin knows more about girls and their ways than you'll ever do," I said. "I shouldn't be surprised if he marries Trixie."

For just about ten seconds David stared aghast, and then he found the correct epithet.

"Man." he said accusingly, "it would

be a physiological crime!"

I-yawned. It seemed the only adequate retort. A man who can describe the possible marriage of the girl as a physiological crime is not in love as I understand the term, and that settled Mrs. Correns's idea. I think my yawn annoyed David; anyway, he rushed off at a speed of which I had not previously suspected him capable.

I was still sitting in the garden when Trixie came back alone, swinging her racquet carelessly and walking very slowly. "Hello!" I said. "Where's Dick?"

She looked at me in the contemplative way which was becoming familiar to me, and ignored my question to ask one of her

"Do men ever become civilised?" she asked me, quite as if it were a normal and ordinary topic. She drew a garden chair opposite me and sat down.

"Why — ah — surely you don't suggest——" I was completely at a loss.

"I don't think they ever do," said Trixie.

She smiled suddenly. "I'm not complaining," she said, and then, just as the subject was becoming interesting, she dropped it. "We are invited to the Manor House for dinner," she said. "Is your poor shoulder well enough for ceremonial use?"

"It is much better, thank you," I said. "But why the sudden invitation? Mrs. Correns said nothing about it when I saw her

vesterday.''

Trixie smiled from the serene heights

of knowledge.

"Mrs. Correns didn't know yesterday

that the—the occasion would arise."

I could tell by the mischievous delight in her eyes that Trixie enjoyed my surprise, and there was a change in her manner and attitude which puzzled and interested me.

"Look here, Trixie," I said, "what is the mystery? You are positively bursting

with news. What has happened?"

"Oh, lots and lots of things - whole heaps of them! I've played tennis, I've learned a few things about men and civilisation, and—and I've become engaged to marry."

"You've what?"

Trixie laughed quite openly at my astonishment.

"I thought that would surprise you," she said. "It surprises me even now." She became suddenly serious. "What do you think Mrs. Correns will say?" she asked, with evident misgivings as to my answer.

I was too busy taking in the news to answer at once, and, if the truth must be told, too much worried and doubtful of the wisdom of the step Trixie had taken. Engagements are risky at any time, but in this case there was no shadow of evidence that the principals knew what they were doing or why. I became conscious that Trixie was waiting for my reply. Correns likes you very much," I said hurriedly. "I don't think you need worry about her. But—honestly, Trixie, do you think-that is-oh, look here, how did it happen?"

Trixie, like all her sex, tells a story without

consideration for rules.

"Well, you see," she began illuminatingly,"Dick knocked David down, and---"

But wait a minute! For Heaven's sake, wait a minute!" I cried. "What before? Knocked David Whatever did Dick do that for ? "

Trixie tried again.

"Well, of course David was very trying,"

she said, with an air of severe impartiality. "He needn't have called Dick a degenerate young savage, need he? Men don't like being called names, and—

I stood up in exasperation.

"Will you tell me from the beginning," I said, "or must I drag it out of you by force? What were you doing when David

arrived, and what did he say?

I will omit the stages by which I arrived at something like a connected narrative. If you have ever encountered an excited girl with a story to tell, you'll know what it was like. Briefly, then, it appears that David, taking my casual suggestion as a literal truth, received a bigger shock than I had intended, and stumbled incidentally on the knowledge that he was unable to contemplate the prospect with any pleasure or resignation. Undoubtedly he made a long stride towards normality in that discovery; but habits are not easily shed, and a long course of dogmatic exercise in pure reason led him badly astray now. He always made the mistake of assuming the same point of view in his opponents that is, the same passion for exact statement and willingness to submit any question to the test of argument and demonstra-It was all of a piece with the madness of this love affair that David. acting on a reckless hint from me, should carry the matter to the point of absurdity in all good faith. He really expected Dick Pascoe—honest, thick-headed Dick-to defend his title by argument; and the absurdest point in the whole absurd situation was that Dick had no title to defend, and could make neither head nor tail of the whole business. Bear this in mind, and then hear David's opening speech.

"Miss Malvern, is it true that you intend

to marry this man?"

As nothing was further from Trixie's intention, she found no answer, but stood covered with confusion and amazement.

"Let me urge you not to trust an impulse," continued David gravely. "Your own intellect, though feminine and erratic, is infinitely superior to anything you can expect from Mr. Pascoe. Think of——"

'Here, I say, Correns, what's the game?" said Dick, suspecting ridicule, not without

excuse, I think.

David turned to him patiently.

"The game," he said, "is an attempt to prevent misery for both of you. I have no quarrel with you personally——

"No, but you soon will have," said Dick irritably. "Drop it! Do you hear? That kind of humour isn't appreciated. Your service, Trixie."

"Pardon me," said David, "this question is extremely important. I am discussing your entire unsuitability as a candidate for Miss Malvern's hand."

This was becoming too much for Dick.

"Drop it, I say! I've had enough of you and your infernal superiority. If you think this is funny, I don't. If you were half a man, I'd give you a jolly good licking. Infernal impudence!"

David turned to Trixie.

"You hear that, Miss Malvern," he said. "Not a coherent argument in his head. A

degenerate young savage——"

It was at this point that Dick forgot his duty to the lady and knocked David down. Personally I don't blame him much—the whole episode must have been exasperating to the point of imbecility. Trixie didn't blame him, either. She was furiously angry with David for thrusting an impossible and embarrassing situation upon her. she couldn't understand was how he ever imagined that Dick Pascoe was a possible She said so, and I felt distinctly uncomfortable. I knew, of course, and I realised very clearly, now that the damage was done, that I was very largely responsible. I managed to evade confession by pressing for further news of the battle, but my conscience troubled me.

David appears to have had a very bad time. Dick Pascoe may be a degenerate young savage, but he is always in training. David, on the other hand, has cultivated his reason at the cost of his body. I don't think anything could have driven the fact home with such force as the two minutes of brutal fighting which followed the first blow. He did his best and apparently his spirit was game, but by the time Trixie managed to separate the two men, David's glasses were broken, his nose was bleeding, and two of his teeth were gone. In this condition-and I mustn't forget the distressing complication which shortness of breath introduced—he listened to a complete and exhaustive account of Trixie's opinion of his conduct. It was a distressingly humiliating experience, and I could feel sorry for him even as I realised that it was deserved and probably salutary.

In the end Trixie overreached herself. I don't know at what point in the proceedings she changed over from contempt

to commiseration, but the change came, and with it a new embarrassment. Pascoe cleared off, feeling ashamed of his own loss of temper and considerably puzzled by the whole affair, and then David and Trixie were left facing each other and a new factor in the situation. From this point the information obtainable by me became confused and unsatisfactory. All I could gather definitely was that David was very humble and unlike his old self, and that Trixie was very near to tears. If I may be allowed to make a speculation, I should say that they were both facing the realisation that the bases of communication they had established were faulty and inadequate. Life was thrusting a barrier between their old habit of quarrelling and their new desire to understand each other, but all the time that they remained, puzzled and unequal to the situation, something within them was working towards adjust-

Trixie came across to me as I sat in the garden, thinking of the queer ways of love and youth, and kissed me on the forehead.

"Please don't worry about us, dear," she said. "I know you haven't liked David very much, but it wasn't all his fault. We—we didn't understand him, and he didn't understand—oh, lots of things!" She seemed to find it easier to speak now that her face was hidden from me. "You see, darling, he loves me and I love him, and it makes such a difference. You wouldn't believe what a difference it has made in David already. We are—oh, well, you'll see!"

I said nothing to that. These sudden conversions are dangerous, and, although I hoped for the best, I was not going to throw my judgment overboard just at once.

"Well, well," I said, sighing a little, "it's your affair, Trixie. If you think you can

civilise him, I have nothing to say."

Trixie laughed with supreme scorn. "Oh, that!" she said, and dismissed the question from consideration. For several minutes we sat silent, thinking each our own thoughts, and then Trixie really did surprise me.

"I wonder, darling," she said dreamily, "whether David would be quite such a love if he were not so—so foolish? I mean"—as I stared at her helplessly—"would he—that is——"She broke off, smiling to herself in complete disregard of my amazement. "Never mind, dear. I couldn't make you understand. You are not a woman."

That was all. On my word of honour, that was all. I had hoped for a return to plain English and common-sense, but apparently I had only exchanged one form of conundrum for another. I am convinced now that no power on earth can make the new generation abandon its allusiveness. David was just as bad as Trixie. When I congratulated him on his engagement, he shook my hand warmly.

"I cannot realise it yet," he said, "but Trixie will help me. I wonder"—he paused, regarding me absently—"I wonder if it has occurred to you that Trixie is essentially——But never mind. On second thoughts, I'll go and ask her."

He did, I suppose; and I hope she knew what he was talking about! Ah, well, at least they have reached the personal element, and I think—yes, I think they are happy.



IN THE CHILTERNS.

THE road from Tring to Wendover—you know it, sir? Not !!

No matter. All the better sport the unknown path to try,

To lose and find ourselves again a hundred times or so;

The undiscovered track's the best; sling on your pack and go.

The King's highway is far too tame to fit the vagrant mood, When early summer sunshine floods the meadow and the wood; But through the wood, the landlord vows, we'll never find the way. Let's risk it: careful vintner men don't chart our path to-day.

The road from Tring to Wendover in miles is barely five, Should you on tar-macadam choose to pad the hoof or drive; But that were all too brief a stretch for right discerning men; For gentlemen adventurers like us it's nearer ten.

Perdition and the broad highway we know are close akin; Let those who favour headlong speed take fierce delight therein; For us the glade, the beechen shade, where softly to the tread The leaves of many a yesteryear a russet carpet spread.

So deviously by copse and hedge and meadow-path we stroll, With luck and only luck for guide until we make our goal—That Chiltern township tucked beneath the slope of Halton crest, Whence the broad vale of Aylesbury breaks outward to the west.

The road from Tring to Wendover, it means, to you and me, A joy that plodding highwaymen will never taste or see. One pair of tramps unorthodox can swear the only thing To match it would be—just the road from Wendover to Tring!

J. D. SYMON.

THE MAGIC BEADS

By SILVIA THORN-DRURY

ILLUSTRATED BY E. H. SHEPARD

BRASS chestnut roaster on a red fire makes the loveliest flames; sapphire blue and jade green, hyacinth and emerald, they spurt up from the glow.

"Just like a fairy tale," said Placida,

watching them dreamily.

Madeleine shook the roaster vigorously; an amethyst flame chased a lime-green one

up the chimney.

"I only wish we were living in a fairy tale," she said, peeling a chestnut, "then I should have three wishes, or a fairy godmother, or something nice."

"What would you ask your fairy god-

mother for ? " inquired Placida.

Madeleine spat out a piece of burnt chestnut.

"Sorry," she said; "that one was black and not comely. Oh, I'd ask for a white fox fur, and an emerald ring, and a husband with hair like Owen Nares's, and—a pearl necklace instead of a baby. What would you choose?"

"I don't care much. I don't think I want things so much-pearl necklaces and husbands, I mean; I just want something to happen-something new and exciting and

adventurous."

Placida sat upright, faintly flushed as she voiced the age-old craving of Youth for Romance. "Oh, Madeleine, I know I'm a beast to grumble, but sometimes I feel as if I shall go raving, tearing mad if something doesn't happen soon. I'm so sick of pretending I'm having a good time—crowds and crowds of horrible girls, talking and talking about nothing, and little footling tea-parties, and going to see the piccys, and all the little silly things we do every day. I really don't feel as if I can bear it any more. Jim and Billy, poor lambs, they bore me so. Jim's an angel, but he can only talk about motor-bikes, and I loathe the way Billy does his hair, and I do wish something would happen," she wound up

Madeleine looked up from her task of

peeling chestnuts.

"Well, why don't you do something about it?" she said. "It's no earthly use waiting on your own doormat; you must go out and wait on someone else's. This is an age of push; you read that almost every day in the newspapers."

"What I should like to read in the newspapers," rejoined Placida, "is, 'If Miss Placida Durlacher would apply to Messrs. Stick-in-the-Mud, she would hear of something to her advantage,' and then be able to roll in countless millions for the rest of

my life."

"M'yes. Or, 'Would the lady with the musquash coat and the pink ribbon in her hair, who was sitting in the third row of the stalls--' Let's get the paper and see if there's anything exciting.'

There wasn't—just rows of "Bright, refined widows."

Madeleine threw it down despairingly and

prepared to depart.

"What a pity they've stopped those advertisements in La Vie Parisienne—you know, 'Jeune officier, mitrailleur, demande cafard.' I often thought of answering one for fun, only I never could get further than 'Je t'aime.'" marraine jeune, gaie affect, pour chasser

"Personally, I should have thought that quite far enough," returned her friend grimly. "Anyway, I think that 'lonely soldier' touch was played out long ago. You got most awfully thrilled, and then the lonely one turned out to be the cook's literary brother, with a fat wife and infant twins as a sort of anti-climax. Oh, no, that's one of the ancient joys!"

Madeleine, swathed in skunk, prepared

to depart.

Placida watched her enviously. She was the sort of girl to whom things happened. Adventures, sentimental and otherwise, ran out to meet her. She never got a smut on her nose or a hole in her stocking; she seemed untouched by the domestic catastrophes which beset less fortunate people.

Madeleine wrestled with the hook of her

fur. Suddenly she started.

"How idiotic of me, Placida! Of course I'll lend you my beads. Why on earth didn't I think of it before? Dicky brought them from India or somewhere, and they're supposed to be most awfully lucky. I haven't worn them for ages till to-day. It's simply providential." She unfastened them and held them out. They were rather like Venetian beads. Blue, pink, purple, and mauve, they winked in the firelight.

"I'm going up to Scotland to-morrow, you know, and I shall be away for about three months, so you must wear them then." She fastened them round Placida's neck, where they hung like a fairy rainbow, transforming her blue serge dress by their

radiance.

"I hope you'll have as many adventures as there are beads, nice-coloured ones, too," remarked Madeleine. "They really are supposed to bring you your heart's desire, you know, so please wear them."

Placida looked at them gratefully.

"You are a rosy-pink brick," she said.

"Write and tell me all the adventures they bring you," implored Madeleine on the doorstep.

Placida promised.

II.

PLACIDA came down to breakfast next morning full of curiosity as to what miracle the magic beads had worked in the night. She half expected to see a legal-looking document by her plate at breakfast, containing news of a fabulous fortune, or a missive from an unknown admirer, or an invitation to a really superior dance, or tickets for a theatre.

There was nothing, not even a postcard. Breakfast was just the same as usual, except that the coffee was burnt. So far the beads had achieved little.

She spent the morning at the creche where she worked, machining holland overalls and sighing for the unknown.

Two people admired the beads. Placida smiled and said nothing. She decided the beads didn't look nice on her white shirt,

and changed into her violet jumper.

• After lunch she started out for a walk in Kensington Gardens. As she walked along the High Street, bright with the earliest, newest spring sunshine, she began to feel more cheerful, and forgot all about the failure of the beads in thinking of the niceness of the day. She passed several flower-

sellers with baskets tightly packed with bunches of violets, daffodils, and pheasanteye narcissus, pale coral anemones; little tight prim bunches of snowdrops, even a few rather anæmic-looking stocks and beautiful vicious Chinese anemones, purple and scarlet, with their deep blue-black centres.

She bought a bunch of Parma violets and pinned them to her coat, so that the beads should have something nice to look at. Then she crossed over and went in at the gate where the woman with balloons always sits, and started up the Broad Walk.

The Round Pond looked quite blue from the reflection of the fine wintry sky, and Placida wished very much she had a boat to sail, or that she could take off her stockings and squelch her toes in the nice damp orange mud round the pond. It was the sort of day which impelled one to do those kinds of agreeable, if unusual, things.

Placida sat and watched the Round Pond, and the boats, and the jolly pattern the thin black branches of the trees made against the pale sky, till it was time to go home. She decided to cut across the grass into the Flower Walk. If she had not deserted the virtuous gravel paths, this story would probably never have been written.

In order to walk on the grass, it is necessary to climb some iron railings. Placida poised one foot on each side of the fence, felt something snap, and a shower of blue and pink and gold shot past her into the grass. The precious necklace had caught round the knob of the railing and snapped.

Her heart sank; she was filled with an overwhelming horror; she felt as if every drop of blood in her body was curdled with misery. The lucky beads! Madeleine would be furious, and they hadn't brought a single adventure in their train.

The short grass was spangled with the fragile, glittering things. Placida, her face scarlet, knelt and collected as many as she could.

The usual small crowd collected from nowhere and gazed apathetically at her misfortune. An old lady in tight black kid gloves made futile efforts to help. Gradually the crowd, having made up its mind that this was no matter of battle, murder, or sudden death, and therefore unlikely to afford much entertainment, moved off on its several ways.

Placida chased a peacock-blue bead over the gravel path. It rolled out of her reach



"Placida sat back on her heels and raised a scarlet and worried countenance to behold a strange young man, the errant bead glittering in the palm of his hand."

with lightning speed, stopped a moment so that the sun touched the golden blob on it and made it wink maliciously, and then headed straight for the wheels of a passing perambulator.

"Oh!" sighed Placida in anguish.

"Steady, chaps, it's all right," said a voice, and Placida sat back on her heels and raised

a scarlet and worried countenance to behold a strange young man, the errant bead glittering in the palm of his hand.

The perambulator pursued its way, having failed to crush the bead by a bare

quarter of an inch.

"How splendid! Thanks most awfully," was the best she could manage. Then she

gulped and blinked, and wandered what was

the correct procedure.

Here she was, kneeling in the gravelled path in the middle of Kensington Gardens, the lap of her blue skirt full of multicoloured beads, talking to a total stranger.

The blink had shown her he was young and a sailor—moreover, he had blue eyes. She felt grateful to him for conforming to a pleasant superstition, and not having hazel or brown ones.

He collected two more beads which had been coquetting behind a tuft of grass, and handed them to her.

"These two were awfully coy," he said;
"I had no end of a hunt for them. I do

hate those quiet, retiring natures."

"Thank you ever so," she murmured.
"You see, I was so frightfully worried, 'cos they're not really mine. A friend lent them to me, and, although they don't look very exciting, they're supposed to be lucky—they came from India." She strove to force them into her little purse as she spoke, but there were too many.

"Half a second," said the strange young man, and produced a large and stout envelope from his pocket. "I think this'll be a more commodious residence. And look here, don't think it 'a good drop o' sarcs,' as the lower deck has it, but, if I were you, I'd get an E string to thread them on next time, and I think you'd find they'd behave better."

Placida said "Thank you!" again, and then somehow, quite suddenly, she found herself telling him all about the beads, and how mouldy she'd felt, and how they hadn't brought her a single adventure.

"And Madeleine said, 'Oh, Placida, I know they'll bring you luck,' and they

haven't a bit," she finished.

They walked together over the short stubbly grass, the young man carrying the

envelope full of beads.

The sky had turned a faint lavender, flecked with little fleecy pink clouds, like the cotton-wool in which cheap jewellery is packed.

At the gates they stopped.

"Look here, Miss—Placida—I don't know your other name," said he, "we've been talking about adventures, and I'm going to be adventurous now, and, if you don't like it, please believe it's all pour le bon motif, and don't shoot—for a minute. I've got blue mould, too, and all my people are in Australia, and I've got five days more before I go back to my ship. If you want

to earn a little halo and a lot of gratitude, would you give me the inestimable privilege of your company at lunch, and do some shows? You could tell your people you found me at large and obviously incapable, and took pity on me, or that you picked me out of the Bargain Basement. Do say you think I'm a nice bargain. Oh, and I'm twenty-one, guaranteed not to spot and cockle in the rain, and all the rest of it."

Placida looked at the pink clouds and smiled. "I think I'll accept your guarantee," she said. ." My other name is Durlacher, and I'm nineteen, and I'd like to be able to call you something besides Mr.—er—er——"

"Oh, I've got lots of other names," he interposed quickly—"Timothy Richard Aloysius Byrne. There you are, take your choice! Every time you ring the bell you get the penny back. Incidentally, the left-hand end is recommended. What about 'Aloysius'? It has never yet been profaned by the tongue of man—or blessed by that of woman. Shall I be jeopardising all my chances of friendship if I ask you to come and have tea now, and talk about 'Shakespeare and the musical glasses'? Let us sit upon hard chairs and tell sad stories of the death of kings."

They had tea in a little shop off Church Street, all fumed oak furniture and Art cretonnes, and Placida confided to Timothy the saga of her sorrows and the ballad of

her boredom.

"You're all right," she concluded. "Sailors are always cheery, tearing all over the place, and going to dances and things."

Timothy smiled.

"Think of the times when we're far from the land and the—er—refining influences of a good Christian home. There was a fellow who lived hundreds of years ago, and wrote a whole poem about the sad time they had at sea, whiling away the hours playing tiddlywinks or shove-ha'penny or whatever was popular in those old, ancient days. You know the sort of thing—

Or else at serious ombre play: But why should we in vain Each other's ruin thus pursue? We were undone when we left you...

Does bring a sob to the throat, doesn't it? Have a nasty bun and ponder on my sorrows. That you should complain, with gaiety at your very doors, sticks in the—well, throat."

Placida bit on the maligned bun and

decided it wasn't-maligned.

"Gaiety ought to be plural, you know. 'C'est une grande folie de vouloir être sage tout seul.' Starting from the left-hand corner, read 'gai' for 'sage,' and there you have the solution of many of life's problems."

"The germ of that idea struck me ages ago, when I was at sea," remarked Timothy, so I became a lonely sailor—in the per-

sonal column of The Times."

"I shouldn't think the personal column would be very lonely," said Placida. "There are always lots of 'bleeding hearts' and 'Yours to eternity, Flossie,' you might catch on the rebound."

"Likewise impecunious gentleman in need of fifty pounds, or a gramophone, or a hotwater bottle. It's all very matey, but a jolly sound investment," he added, with a reminiscent smile. "One doubtless bighearted and well-meaning young lady, hailing from Wales, dilated for four pages on the vagaries of shrimping, even going as far as a dimensioned sketch of the net. I thought, being of a mercenary turn of mind, of sending it to *Home Hobbies* or some equally encyclopædic periodical."

"I know," rejoined Placida, shaking crumbs from the front of her blouse. "'How to make money in your spare time.' Next,

please."

"Another good lady was very anxious to know whether I came of honest and respectable parents. It was too horrible. I had to write and confess that a slight difficulty with my aspirates, coupled with an unfortunate but—how it hurts to say it!—only too intimate connection with the mincemeat industry, put me, I was afraid, entirely beyond the pale; then just a hope that her pen would perhaps bring her the affection she had so far been denied. Funny people there are in the world. I s'pose that's why I used to write Quot homines in my copybook when I was young."

"Oh, but the things one writes in copybooks are meant for a race apart," said Placida. "Our present behaviour is a shining example of things one didn't oughter

do, isn't it?'

Timothy reached for his hat.

"Then up and spake the fair lady. Mille pardons, mademoiselle. I feel now that, despite the admitted unorthodoxy of our acquaintance, I was perhaps indiscreetly quick to take your hint—swish! After this rebuff I shall probably haunt you for the rest of your life, a silent witness to the cruelty of woman."

"After all, it's the beads who were in-

discreet, not us," said Placida pensively. "Please don't haunt me. I'm terrified of ghosts, and would do almost anything to avert such a contingency."

"You needn't worry, then. 'It's so simple.' Like furniture on the instalment plan, you know," remarked Timothy. They walked down Church Street together. "Just explain me to your people," he continued, "and come and lunch with me at the Savoy to-morrow, and regard me as a charity, if you hate it very much, and p'r'aps the magic beads will reward you with a first-class adventure."

On this they parted, and Placida spent the rest of the evening in a state of feverish wonder at her own emancipation and the construction of a story which would not stick in the parental gullet. Finally she ended by telling the truth.

Virtue is occasionally its own reward.

"And he knows Cousin Alfred quite well," she finished, dragging forth a moth-eaten commander whom she had regarded up till then as rather a drug in the family market.

Mrs. Durlacher, who was engaged in turning the heel of a sock, gleaned a vague impression, amidst an ocean of purl and plain, that Placida had met the young man in company with Cousin Alfred, consequently her conventional withers remained unwrung.

Placida went to bed feeling a curious affinity with the man who first ate an oyster, Christopher Columbus, widowers who remarry, and other adventurous souls.

III.

THE next five days passed in a whirl of lunches, teas, dinners, theatres and dances. Timothy re-threaded the beads, and they accompanied them to all these amusements. They also indulged in less worldly and even more entertaining things, such as going to Hampstead on top of a 'bus and walking across the Heath, to return home to tea with an egg to it, to pretend it was the country. Another time they walked to Chelsea Embankment and fed the gulls, who left their resting-place on an old barge to circle round them with greedy cries.

Even the simplest joys are evanescent. On the fifth day Timothy rejoined his ship. Placida, clutching the beads in one rather hot little hand, gave him the other. "Goodbye," she said, "and good luck."

"Cheero," said Timothy. "And if you don't answer my letters, I shall think you love another, and buy a revolver and poison

myself forthwith. No, seriously, this has been the most wonderful leave I've ever had, and thank you ever so much." He held the little hand tightly in both of his. "You will write to me, won't you? It's fair does."

"Of course I will, honest Injun, cross my heart," she replied in a fervent burst, and

so they parted.

Placida tried to persuade herself that it was some fairy magic of the beads which made the last six days so enchanting in retrospect, but it was a very real emotion which bumped her heart when she received a long epistle from Timothy, full of thanks for past favours, and rosy hopes for his next drop of leave. She made herself very inky over the reply, and as she wrote the last lines her heart felt full of gratitude towards the beads. Without their escapade, she would still be bereft of everything that made life exciting.

"Dear things, dear beads!" she whispered as she addressed the envelope, and, filled with a strange and unaccountable tenderness, she kissed their smooth and

shiny coldness.

"What are you mumbling about beads?" said her mother, with pardonable irritation. "Do hurry up and finish that letter, or

you'll miss the post."

Placida finished addressing it in a great hurry, and handed it to the maid, and sat back with a sigh of satisfaction. She began to wonder how long it would take before it reached Timothy, and whether he would be surprised to hear so soon. She tried to visualise his delight on receiving it, and generally occupied herself with the pleasant furtive imaginings of those about to fall in love.

When a fortnight had gone by and she had had no answer, she began to feel vaguely irritated, and when the silence lengthened into a month, life seemed a very poor thing. She lived through days of sick disappointment, when the postman's knock filled her with feverish anticipation, only to be met with a sense of overwhelming blankness at his failure to deliver the expected letter. She began to loathe the sound of his approach; she felt he was conspiring with Fate to defraud her.

By a series of well-worn calculations she had decided there was no possible excuse for Timothy's not having written within a fortnight. Like a litany she went over and over the excuses for his silence. He might be ill. Yes, but not too ill to write a line,

not if he'd really wanted to, said a tiresome little inner voice.

Her letter might have got lost in the post; that sort of thing often happened—in magazine stories. After all, she'd heard

Mary take it to the pillar-box.

No, these excuses, thin as they were to begin with, were now worn threadbare from constant repetition. Only the horrible truth remained—he just hadn't bothered to write. Those wonderful five days had meant nothing more to him than the most fleeting amusement, and now he was bored and had indicated as much by his silence. The traditional fickleness of his calling, as regards the affections, had manifested itself, and he was probably, even at this moment, lighting the candles of an easily transferred adoration at some new and distant altar.

She felt full of despair, more bitter than ever since it was impotent. The solace of some direct and violent action was denied

her; she could only wait.

After six weeks of extreme unhappiness, Placida relegated the necklace to her glove box, and went to the creche every day instead of three times a week. The post brought its usual quota of catalogues and circulars, and her heart beat just the same as usual—nearly.

Then one afternoon, when hope was dead and buried, and the world was just mud and puddles, Placida returned home from the crèche to find Timothy on the doorstep.

" Hallo!" he said.

She felt very sick; the raindrops and her heart-beats sounded in her ears with mingled thuds. She tried to speak, but nothing happened.

Timothy was saying something about "Good luck to find you in," and "Lots

to tell you.'

She put down her umbrella in a sort of dream. In doing so she pinched her finger rather badly, but she hardly felt the pain through her bewilderment.

They crossed the hall and stood uneasily

in the drawing-room.

"I—I don't understand," said Placida

hesitatingly, "why-"

"All communications addressed to the proper quarter, and accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope, will be answered in due course. Please, Placida, I do want to explain. You must have been thinking me the most casual, bad-mannered devil."

"Oh, no!" said Placida quite untruly. Timothy produced a crumpled piece of paper from his pocket, which he smoothed

out, a faint smile on his face.

"I'm afraid it's a little bit your fault, you know," he said; "your letter only fetched up yesterday." He held out the envelope.

Placida took it wonderingly and read in her own writing: "Sub-Lieutenant T. Byrne, R.N., H.M.S. *Beads*, c/o G.P.O., London."

There are some moments in life which defy description—this was one of them.

"Beads!" she said faintly. "H.M.S. Beads! I must have been mad when I wrote that! How absolutely idiotic! I knew those beastly beads weren't really lucky. Of course I knew you were in the Celtic, but I remember now I—I was thinking about the beads, and Mummie was worrying me to hurry up. . . ." She paused and blushed, to her extreme annoyance.

Timothy must be thinking her the most pluperfect fool; her eyes filled with the

foolish tears of embarrassment.

Timothy saw them and his face changed. "Stand from under, by the way," he said. "I'm going to be serious for a change. I've spent the most horrible six weeks of my life waiting for your letter, hoping you'd write, and you never did. I thought you were fed up, but I was going to come and bully you just the same, 'cos I think a fellow

who embarks on an affair like this ought to raise the bounce to carry it through." He paused and watched the flickers from the fire reflected as jumping shadows on the wall. In the faint light Placida's little pale face looked like a pearly wedge-shaped piece of honesty. He took both her hands in his. "Oh, little thing, I tried not to worry about you, but I just couldn't help loving you more and more. I believe those beads were enchanted."

"Oh, how idiotic men are!" sighed Placida in a shaken voice. "I was so unhappy cos I thought you didn't want to

write to me!"

Timothy seized her in his arms and kissed her very thoroughly. "A very just retribution for an unsupported disbelief—wowwow!" he said. "Dear old thing, all men are fools, and I'm the most foolish not to have kissed your little ugly face and told you how much I loved you the very first day I saw you. Never mind. My pyschology may be bovine, my outlook crude and raw, but I never abandon vital matters."

Once again Placida found herself in his arms. Outside the faint patter of rain and the dripping of the overfull gutters had no power to disturb them. The magic beads had worked the most ancient wonder in all

the world.

SEA-GULLS.

O SEA=GULLS, screaming in your lonely flight,
What lost soul summon ye?

Call ye farewell to ships gone by at night,
Or sailors drowned at sea,

Or in your vision rises, sad and white,
Some ghostly memory?

Watch ye the mermaids in the white sea foam,
Singing in endless play,
Weaving their charms to lure the wanderer home—
Home to their caverns grey—
And cry ye to seafarers as they roam,
Warning them far away?

Take ye my message to the stormy sky—
Out to the thundering sea—
Call to the spirits of air as ye sweep by
In strong-winged liberty—
That here imprisoned is a soul as shy,
A spirit wild as ye.

MARJORY M. REYNOLDS.



TWO POINTS OF VIEW.

EMINENT ARTIST: Be careful with this picture—it's not dry. PORTER: All right, sir; I've got my old coat on.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE. By H. F. Frampton.

"I SAY," demanded Bill, rushing in on me, "what's wrong with Frederick these days?"

Bill—his real name is Aubrey Clarence—is always rushing in on somebody. One of these days he'll find no one at home, and burst all

over the hearthrug with bottled excitement. "Have you noticed it, too?" I admiringly

rejoined.

Noticed it?" echoed Bill. "How can you help it? How can you help noticing a fellow who jumps sixteen feet when you speak to him, and goes about with a face three yards long? What's he waiting to be arrested for? That's what I want to know."

Freddie is a harmless, if secretive, youth, who is as likely to be taken up for criminal behaviour as I am for loitering in a theatre queue. Daily between ten and four, Saturdays and Sundays excepted, he is to be found in the City. He goes there for the look of the thing-to keep the markets steady, as it were. Furthermore, he maintains respectable hours and sticks to one brand of cigarette.

"He must be suffering from overwork," I

suggested,

"Perhaps not," scouted Bill, dumping his bulk on the edge of a small table. "Do you know what I believe is the matter? I believe he's murdered someone, forgotten who it is, and is trying to think why he did it.'

At this point a threatening crack came from

the table, and Bill removed himself. "You watch him next time you run into him,"

he said hastily.

"I will," I answered, eyeing the table. "If you feel like sitting down again, you'll find the top of the piano dusted."

The next day, by loping along like a wolfdog, I managed to overtake Freddie as he receded from the endearing precincts of his daily toil.

"Hallo, old bird!" I panted, clapping him on that part of the back diametrically opposed to the mazard. "Is it weakness of intellect or a rather tough worm in your little inside?"

He leapt as though scalded, and faced round.

"Hallo!" he returned hollowly.

"What's weighing on your mind?" I demanded. "Anything you say will be treated in strict confidence, if not worth retailing."

" What—me ? " said Freddie.

nothing on my mind."

"I know," I sympathetically rejoined. "What I meant was, what are you troubled about?"
"What—me?" he repeated. "Nothin

" Nothing.

Why?"
"Well, why did you take me for the long arm of the law just now, and jump like you did?'

" What--me ? "

"Don't keep plagiarising yourself, Freddie. If you look round carefully, you'll find we are alone. Therefore there is only one person I can possibly be addressing."

He grinned feebly. "What—me?" he said. "Have a cigarette, and let's drop into the Tube. You can tell me all about it on the way

He refused the cigarette and declined the Tube.

"If you don't mind, I'll go by 'bus," he said. "My nerves won't stand the racket of the Underground."

"You may," I told m. "I'm going by ube. And mind— Tube. when, later on, I'm subpænaed, my evidence is bound to go against you. There must be a reason for the state of your nerves, and I put the worst interpretation on it."

I left him. *

"Well?" Bill inquired, a day or so later. "What do you make of him?"

He half raised himself on to the table, thought better of it, and finally sat down on the coal-

scuttle. "Neurasthenia," I replied, "or something

newer still." At that moment Freddie's head popped in at the door.

"Been subpænaed vet?'' he inquired cheerfully.

"Come in," I invited,
"and tell us all about it.

We're bound to know sooner or later."

"All about what?" said Freddie, closing the

door behind him.
"The nerves," put in Bill. "What do you bathe 'em with?"

"Tobacco," returned Freddie promptly. "I had the jumps all right. They came on about the time I gave up smoking, and that was about a month ago."

"Gave up smoking?"

"Yes," continued Freddie. "I did it as a protest. They put a halfpenny on the price of Golden Spangles. I only smoke those, you know."

"But I offered you one the other day," I pointed out, "and you refused it. You won't bring down the price of Golden Spangles by refusing to smoke those already paid for. "Was that a Golden Spangle?" said Freddie

dreamily. "I didn't know. However," he finished, pulling out his case and lighting up, "they came down to their original price yesterday, so I'm smoking again. Wonderful how rotten you feel without a smoke.'

"Do you mean to say you've deprived yourself of tobacco for a month as a protest against the extra halfpenny?"

asked him.

FINE ALES

"Certainly," he explained indulgently. "It's the principle you're up against, you see. Lots of other people have done the same thing. Hence yesterday's fall in price.'

Bill sneered, but I had nothing but pity for

our poor friend. "Freddie," I said, "I, too, am a Golden Spangler. I hate to have to tell you, but Spangles resumed their original price two days after the rise. Why don't you read the advertisements?"



ANOTHER STRIKE.

"'ERE, Jim, our leader's retirin', an' we wants or get somethin' up for 'im, just to sorter show our appreciation, like."
"Ho, I see. Well, wot about gettin' up a farewell strike?"



To the back door of the house in a lonely by road, on the outskirts of a country $_{
m there}$ recently town, came a seedy-looking person, who, after being given some food, made so bold as to proffer this additional request:

"Missus, ask your husband if he ain't got an old pair of trousers to give me."

Whereupon cottager, anxious not to give him any idea that she was alone in the house, replied:

"I am sorry, my good man, but he-ernever wears such things."



A CUTTING INQUIRY.

(An author affirms that people can train themselves to control, and even prevent, bad dreams.)

Although it sounds ideal, we confess

This soothing theory is exposed to doubt. We know the stuff that dreams are made of-yes.

The question raised is, can we cut them out?

Leslie M. Oyler.

WOOL-GATHERING. By T. Hodgkinson.

Mabel had been talking to me quite gaily up to then, but, with the arrival of Phyllis, the conversation had no further need for my services. Together the two girls gloated over the half-finished jumper, and I was left neglected.

"What a gorgeous colour!" cried Phyllis, with an ecstatic emphasis on the adjective, but it appeared that it was help rather than admira-

tion that Mabel required.



"WHAT'S IN A NAME?"

FATHER: Why don't you do some work and make a place for yourself in the world? In the City you're only known as the son of a successful broker.

Son: Yes, dad, and in Society you're only known as the father of one of the smartest men about town.

"I've made it too large," she said. "Do you think I can take it up when I put the sleeves in?" And there followed a discussion far too technical for me to attempt to reproduce it.

It was a solemn discussion, and, listening to it, I had for a moment the feeling—rare to-day—that mine is really the superior sex, until I remembered—being honest—that only the night before Jimmy and I had debated even more

solemnly over the sandpapering of dried oil off an old bat.

Probably it was this thinking of Jimmy that accounts for what followed. At any rate, when I heard Phyllis say, "If I were you, I should unpick it; I'll help you," it somehow seemed to me that it was not her voice that spoke, but his.

"If I were you," I seemed to hear him say again, "I should unpick it." And he pointed to a jumper, which somehow I found myself

holding. The drawing-room had vanished by now, and in its place was a disused tannery somewhere in France-disused, that is, as far as tanning was concerned. Its present function was to house mе more оr Outside, a palatially. neat festoon of barbed wire kept in check that tendency to rove that, implanted in the breasts of her sons, has made England what she is. myself, for instance, rove to London by the nine o'clock six times every week. Outside the wire a field-grey sentry passed the hours in longing for his relief. It was, short, German a prisoner of war camp.

From it we went to work each morning with a regularity that was quite homely, rubbing shoulders from time to time with divers Germans, and it was the refusal of one of these to buy my jumper—or cardigan, if you insist on exactness—as a going concern, that had made Jimmy suggest unpicking.

"You can easily sell this for a mark a ball," he said presently, busily rolling wool round a lump of newspaper whose size did not perhaps err on the side of henesty. "They send it home to

make warm things for the children." And, making the obvious deduction, he added: "She's on her last legs, boy. We'll be home by Christmas."

He made the same deduction daily, for Jimmy was an optimist, and to us, working "behind the lines," the straits of Germany were apparent. Moreover, the officer who had captured us had told us frankly in faultless English that his was

the losing side. Equally fluent, though not so faultless, was the English of our first customer for wool. Before the War he had been a barber in Whitechapel, and he greeted us with a Cockney affability, introducing himself with the apparently genuine air of one anxious to talk over old times.

"Where did they snaffle you, mate?" was the exact conversational opening that he chose, and I wondered at his familiarity with the latest slang. "Snaffle," as far as I remembered, was not pre-War. Doubtless he had gathered it from some other prisoner, but at the time I suspected him of being the Hidden Hand.

There was no question of hiding his hand, however, when we broached the subject of wool. On the contrary, he held it out eagerly, the money ready in it. And, as opportunity occurred, many another hand joined it. There was no lack of customers. For a fortnight we unravelled that cardigan at odd moments, and,

"He was," I confessed—"right out of it."
But I did not tell them how far away I had been.

THE Town Council of a small community met to inspect the plans for a proposed enlargement of the public park. They assembled at the summer-house on the existing pleasure-ground, and, as it was a warm day, they decided to leave their coats there.

"Someone can stay behind and watch them," suggested one of the members of the Council.

"What for?" demanded another member.
"If we are all going out together, what need is there for anyone to watch the clothes?"



MAKING SURE

AUCTIONEER: Now, then, gentlemen, three 'arf-crowns for an eight-day clock! Goes eight solid days without being wound up.

YOKEL: An' 'ow long do she go for when she's wound up, guv'nor?

like the Duke of Plaza-Toro, blazed in the lustre of unaccustomed pocket-money.

But at last there came a day when a client sought us in vain. The cardigan was no more.

"Wool finished. Kaput," I was forced to say—foreign languages come naturally to me—and I sighed to think that our source of income had dried up.

So far, my thoughts had wandered undisturbed, but the sigh apparently attracted attention, for I was suddenly conscious of the voice of Mabel.

"Sorry," she said, in laughing apology for her neglect of me. "We've nearly finished." And Phyllis, who, as my sister, had no compunction about her unsociable conduct, added:

"Poor little man! Was he feeling out of it?"

A STRAIGHT TALK.

Old friend, you have a seamy side, But this the world need never view, For 'tis a secret that can bide A close affair 'twixt me and you.

Old pal, you've got a gleamy side— You kept it dark until to-day: You hung around for Eastertide Before you gave the show away.

You gave it to the scoffing sun, Who toss'd it back with flame and glow That flash'd the truth to everyone— And so, old coat, you've got to go! Teacher (giving a lesson in botany): How to protect our plants in May—that is the subject. Of course you all know our English climate is extremely changeable, and we often get frosts even in May. That being so, unless we take some precautions and protect our plants, they will surely perish.

He paused, suddenly catching sight of a little boy who was apparently paying no attention.

"What is that little boy's name?" he asked.
"Tommy Jones, teacher," replied another

"Tommy Jones, come here!" exclaimed the

teacher. "Now, Tommy, what is the good of my lecturing you on botany if you are not going to pay attention? Did you hear what I was talking about, No, of course not. I was telling you how to protect your plants in May. You know that the English climate is very treacherous; we get frosts frequently in May, and, unless we take precautions, our plants are nipped off. Now, Tommy, just tell me what you would do to protect your own plants in May?"

Tommy (who has been longing for 4.30 p.m., and the excitement of the swimming bath to follow): Plant them in June, teacher.



The fine complacency of the Scotsman as to the inherent superiority of himself and his countrymen to all mere Southrons was well impressed upon an Englishman who had taken a moor in Scotland for the shooting. Determined to live up to the rôle of a Scotch laird, when in the company of an elderly Scotsman in London, he spoke enthusiastically of the country across the Border, of haggis and every other delight that he could recall, including the

recall, including the poetry of Burns, and the novels of Scott, Galt, and various writers of the modern school of fiction. "But you're nae Scotsman," presently objected his auditor—"you're only an improved Englishman."

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Three friends were having a little argument as to the exact date upon which the "longest" day fell.

"I say it is June twenty-first." declared one.

"And I maintain that it's June twenty-second," said number two.

"Both wrong," put in the third of the party.
"The longest day last year was October twenty-fourth—when we put the clock back an hour.
There were twenty-five hours in that day. Just work it out, and you'll realise it!"



THE very ardent and energetic vicar of a poor parish in which a new district church was to



NO MORE DELAY.

"Father has just had his salary increased, Jack." "Good! Now we can afford to get married."

be built, for the benefit of an ever-increasing suburb, was discussing the plans for the new building with the architect. While insisting on size, beauty, and dignity, he suddenly added the reminder that the congregation was a poor one, and that the estimate must not exceed the very modest total which he named. "Oh, come, now," remonstrated the architect genially, "why not say thirty shillings more, and have a tower and spire and a peal of bells, while you are about it?"



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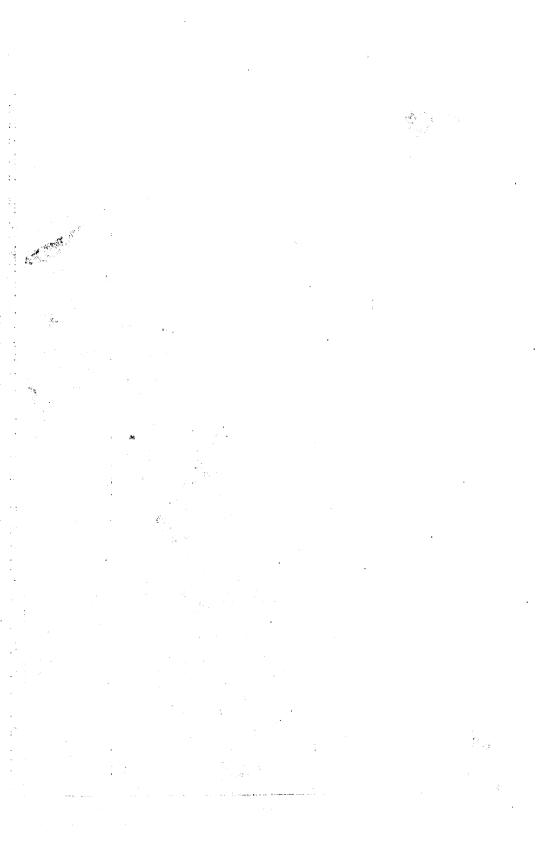


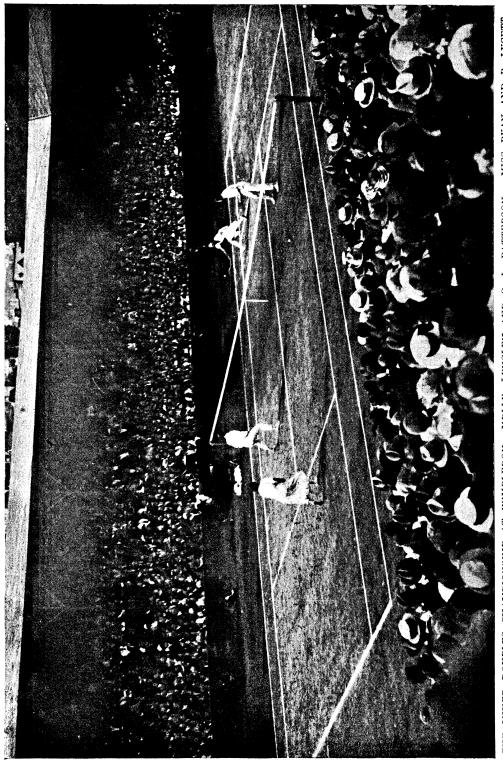
Freedom from infectious diseases means buoyant and healthy childhood

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PROTECTS FROM INFECTION





THE MIXED DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP AT WIMBLEDON: MDLLE. LENGLEN AND G. L. PATTERSON r. MISS RYAN AND R. LYGETT. Photograph by Sport & General. See article "The Present Popularity of Laun Tennis," page 125.



"The trumpets! he cried hoarsely. 'The trumpets! Didn't you hear them? I forgot. Gramarye—I'm pledged to her."

GREY MATTER

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "The Brother of Daphne," "The Courts of Idleness," "Berry and Co."

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

" IT is only right, Lyveden," said Colonel Winchester, "that you should know that I am losing my mind."

The steady, measured tone of the speaker invested this bald statement with a significance which paralysed.

Major Anthony Lyveden stood as if rooted to the floor.

"Yes," said the other, "it was bound to shake you up. But I want you to realise it. Sit down for a minute and think what it means"

Anthony did as he was bid-dazedly. His

employer turned his back and stared into the fire.

The silence which ensued was painful. So much so, that Mr. Samuel Plowman, Solicitor and Commissioner for Oaths, whose nerves were less subordinate than those of the two ex-officers, was hard put to it not to scream.

It must be confessed that in the last twenty-five minutes the poor gentleman had encountered a whole pack of things, none of which had been dreamt of in his philosophy. Little had he imagined, when he was desired

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to attend professionally at Gramarye " precisely at half-past ten on Sunday morning," what that attendance would bring forth. Colonel Winchester had certainly a reputation for eccentricity. His letter was undoubtedly-well, peculiar. Mr. Plowman had smiled upon his finger-nails—a sapient, indulgent smile. He had dealt with eccen-Witness Miss Sinister of tricity before. Mallwood, who had summoned him in just such a way, but more peremptorily. Then he had been desired to superintend the cremation of a favourite cat. That was nine years ago. For the last eight years he had superintended Mallwood. Mr. Plowman had smiled more than ever . . .

At twenty-six minutes past ten that February morning he had ascended the broken steps of the old grey mansion, a little curious, perhaps, but, as he would have told you, "ready for anything." There being no bell, he had raised and let fall the great knocker, and then stood still in the sunshine looking placidly about him. The desolation of the park left him unmoved. judiciously expended, could rectify that. And the house seemed sound enough. They knew how to build in the old days. Colonel Winchester was probably using only one wing for the present. In time to come, possibly . . . Mr. Plowman had straightened his tie.

Then the door had opened.

Clad like a husbandman, his shirt open at the neck, his sleeves rolled to his elbows, the biggest man Mr. Plowman had ever seen had stood regarding him. The cold majesty of a lion had looked out of those terrible eyes; neck, chest, and arms proclaimed the strength of a Hercules; the pose was that of a demi-god at bay. The carelessly brushed fair hair, the broad forehead, the unusual distance between those steel-grey eyes, the fine colour of the cheeks, the fair, close-cut beard, contributed to make the fellow unearthly handsome. But there was something behind it all—a dominating irresistible force, which rose up in a great wave, monstrous and menacing.

Mr. Plowman, who knew little of personality, felt as if he had been suddenly

disembowelled . . .

Thereafter he had been led stumbling through the semi-darkness of a stark hall, by gaunt mouldering passages to the servants' quarters. A fair-sized parlour, looking upon a courtyard, carpetless, curtainless, and something suggestive of an "Orderly Room," had presently received him.

There a deep bass voice had bade him be seated, and he had been told quite dispassionately that he was present to assist

the speaker to prepare for insanity.

All things considered, it is to Mr. Plowman's credit that he was able to appreciate and answer coherently quite a number of questions which his client had put to him upon matters of law. The strain, however, was severe, and he was unutterably relieved when he was directed to move to a table, where paper and ink were waiting, and take down the explicit instructions which the voice would dictate. He had obeyed parrotwise.

The dictation was hardly over when Lyveden had appeared at the window and, at a nod from Winchester, walked to a side-door and entered the room a moment later...

What immediately followed his entrance, gentlemen, we have already seen. Your time being precious, I have but made use of the silence which poor Mr. Plowman found so distressful.

The great figure before the fire turned slowly about and, folding its mighty arms,

leaned against the mantelpiece.

"When it will happen," said the deep voice, "I have no idea. Sometimes it seems very near; at others, as if it may never come. Yet I know it will. So I must be prepared . . . Mr. Plowman is here to assist

me in this preparation.

"I've tried to tell him, Lyveden, about the estate. I've tried to explain what it means to me. I feel that I've failed." Mr. Plowman was physically unable to utter the deprecative ejaculation which he knew should have been here inserted. His lips framed it, but it was never expressed. "I have, however, explained that I am engaged upon its restoration, and that you are my second-incommand. I have told him that when Iwhen my call comes, I wish the work to go on. This is where you come in. I have given him certain instructions, all of which depend upon you." The speaker unfolded his arms and stood upright. "When I'm gone, are you willing to carry on ? "

Before Anthony could answer, the other

had lifted his hand.

"Wait. Don't answer till you know where

you are.

"You'll have a Power of Attorney and absolute control. The moment I'm certified, you'll stand in my shoes. Some of my income must be set aside—I shall have to be looked after, you know—the rest you will administer as if you were me. You'll be the master

of the other men. Your word will be law. The future of Gramarye will be in your hands. You can follow the line I've taken, or you can strike off on your own. You'll have absolute power. I'm ready to give it you if you're ready to take it. But you must wash sentiment out. The question of my helplessness mustn't weigh with you. You mustn't consider anything except yourself. If Gramarye means enough to you-"

"It does," said Lyveden

"Are you sure?"

"There's nothing else in my life."

" Ah . . ."

His keen grey eyes glowing with the light of a visionary, Winchester stepped forward, and Lyveden got upon his feet. For a moment the two men looked one another in the face. Then Winchester shivered suddenly, put a hand to his head, and turned away . . . The pathos of the gesture loosened

Anthony's tongue.

"You know best, sir, and it isn't my place to try to dissuade you. business go through. Once for all, whatever happens to you, I'll carry on. I'll do everything exactly as if you were there. You can rest easy. But—— Oh, how can you think such a thing? I never in all my life saw anyone less likely to go under. You're not the type, sir. It's--it's laughable." The words came tumbling out of an honest heart. "I saw men go mad in France, but they were hardly your sort. Perhaps you're too much alone. Will you let me live with you? Or, if it's insomnia----''

"It isn't insomnia," said the giant. "It's

Mr. Plowman, who was picking up the pen which for the second time had escaped the play of his trembling fingers, started violently and struck his head against the table. The absurd action attracting annoyed attention, he broke into a cold sweat.

"But you can't know that!" cried Anthony. "Only a doctor can—"

"What doctor would tell me the truth?" "You needn't ask him. You can ask to be told the symptoms, and then compare them with yours. If they tally——"

"You speak as a child," said Winchester. "Insanity's not like chicken-pox. There's no book of the rules."

"I don't care. You can't possibly know. On a matter like this your own opinion's worthless. It's the one thing no man can say of himself. You can't judge your own

judgment." Staring into the fire, Winchester began to tap the floor with his toe. "I've said I'll carry on, and you can put my name in, but I'm sorry I was so quick."

" Why ? "

"Because I oughtn't to subscribe to this belief. It's all wrong. I'm admitting a possibility which doesn't exist. I'm humouring a dangerous whim. For over two months I've spent ten hours a day in your company -I've sat at your feet-I've marvelled at your wisdom—I've envied your instinct— I've been dazed by your amazing efficiency --and now I'm to put on record----"

With a stifled roar, Winchester threw back his head and beat with his fists upon

his temples.

"You fool!" he raved. "Out of your own mouth . . . The very wisdom you marvel at has shown me what you can't see. That instinct you say you envy has opened my eyes. I tell you I'm going mad. Time and again I've seen the writing upon the wall. I walk with Insanity of nights. Three months ago I chucked my revolver into the lake, or I shouldn't be here to-day. You babble of madness; I tell you I know the jade. Why, there are nights when the stars slip and the world lies on her side, and only the woods of Gramarye keep me from falling off. I climb from tree to tree, man. They're like the rungs of a ladder, with their tops swaying in the wind over eternity and their roots stuck fast in a gigantic wall -that's the earth . . . on her side . . . They're sticking straight out like pegs. And sometimes I hear a roar coming, and the trees are bent like reeds, and the wind screams to glory, and the whole world turns turtle-swings right over and round. Think of it, man. Twelve thousand miles in a second of time. And there are the stars on my right, and I'm climbing the wrong way up . . . But Gramarye holds me fast. As long as I'm in the woods . . . But the roads are the devil. They make such a gap. You have to climb them to get to the other side. The trees are child's play—they help you. But the roads . . . I shall meet it on one of those roads . . . one day . . . one

The deep sonorous voice faded, and with a whimper Mr. Plowman slid on to the

It was Anthony who picked him up and carried the unconscious lawyer into the open air. As he was helping him to his feet, Winchester appeared with brandy.

"I was so engrossed," he said quietly,

"that I never saw you go down. Was the room too hot?"

Mr. Plowman gulped down some spirit

before replying. Then-

"Yes," he said jerkily. "I—I think perhaps it was. I must apologise, sir."

Winchester inclined his head.

"You have your instructions" he said. "And you have seen Major Lyveden and heard him consent to act. Prepare the. necessary papers immediately and send them to me for signature. If any question arises, lay it before me by letter. If you must see me "-the unfortunate attorney blenched—" write and say so. I need hardly add that, with regard to what has passed between us, I expect your observation of the strictest confidence."

"M-most certainly, sir."
"One thing more." An envelope passed. "There is a cheque on account. If on reflection you wish to take counsel's opinion, and that is not enough, write and say so.' He put out his hand. "Good-bye. I'm much obliged to you for coming. you'll be none the worse."

With starting eyes Mr. Plowman touched the great palm. Then his client turned and, clapping a hat on his head, strode off into

the wilderness.

As the sound of his footsteps died—

"There's a paper—in there—on the table," said Mr. Plowman. "And my hat and coat-and bag-"

"I'll get them," said Anthony. "It's it's very good of you."

When he returned, the lawyer had fastened his collar and was nervously bullying his tie into place.

"Have you a conveyance?" said An-

"N-no, sir. I sent the fly away. I had thought I would walk back," he added miserably.

Clearly the chance of encountering Winchester was not at all to his taste.

"You'd better come with me," said Lyveden. "It's the quickest way to Girdle. I live in the cottage close to the London road."

Mr. Plowman felt inclined to put his arms

round Anthony's neck

Three-quarters of an hour later the little attorney stepped, with a sigh of relief, on to the King's highway. Going and pace had tried him pretty hard, and he was simply streaming with sweat. He pushed back his hat and blew out his cheeks comically. Then he set down his bag and started to mop his face.

"By Jove!" he said, panting. "By Jove, I'm glad to be-" His eves resting upon Anthony, he broke off and fell a-staring. "Why," he cried, "you haven't turned a hair!"

Anthony smiled.

"I take a lot of hard exercise," he

explained.

"By Jove!" said Mr. Plowman, wide-ed. "Well, I'm awfully obliged to eyed.

"You've nothing to thank me for." Lyveden pointed to the cottage. "That's where I live." He put out his hand. "Are you all right now ? ","

"Splendid, thanks. Can't think how I came to faint like that. Of course "

He took the outstretched hand meditatively.

"The room was unusually hot," said

Anthony.

The other stared at him.

"Yes," he said slowly. "By Jove, yes . . ." With a sudden movement he picked up his bag. "Good-bye."

The next moment he was plodding down

the broad white road.

Anthony watched him till he could see him no more. Then he turned on his heel and whistled to his dog.

As he did so, the purr of an engine rose out of the distance, and he turned to see a large touring-car sailing towards him from the direction of Town.

"Come on, Patch!" he cried quickly.

The approach of the car made him The terrier, he knew, had crossed anxious. the road, and there was something about this particular reach of metalling that tempted motorists to pass at the deuce of a pace.

The car sailed on.

It was fifty paces away, when Anthony heard Patch flouncing through the undergrowth in response to his call. In another second the terrier would take his customary flying leap from the bank on to the road on the same side as the car

In a flash, Anthony was full in its path,

spreading out signalling arms.

The tires were tearing at the macadam as Patch leaped into the road and, missing his footing, stumbled on to his nose twentyfive paces ahead.

Anthony ran up to the car, hat in hand.

"I'm awfully sorry," he said. "My dog was coming, and I couldn't stop him. I'd called him before I saw you. I was afraid he'd be run over."

The fresh-faced youth at the wheel stared at him.

"That's all right, sir," he grinned. "How are you? You don't remember me. Every. Met you at Saddle Tree Crosshuntin'. Valerie French introduced us."

"Of course," said Anthony. "I remember you perfectly. Are you all right?"
"Goin' strong, thanks." He turned to a girl at his side. "Joan, let me introduce Major Lyveden—my sister." Anthony bowed. "We're goin' down to Evesham to see some spaniel pups. Are you livin' down here, sir?"

Anthony indicated his cabin with a

smile.

"That's my house," he said. turned forester, and I'm working on this estate."

"But how priceless," said Joan. I were a man, that's just what I'd—

"Yes," said her brother. "I can see you gettin' up at dawn an' hewin' down trees an' things with a bead-bag on your wrist

"I said 'if I was a man,' " protested

Joan. "I said . . ."

The argument waxed, and Anthony began to laugh. So soon as he could get a word in—

" I mustn't keep you," he said. Peter Every glanced at his watch.

"Twenty past twelve!" he cried. "George, no! I'll have to put her along. I suppose you won't come on and lunch with us, sir? We'd love it, and we can drop you here on the way back."

"Yes, do," urged Joan.

Anthony shook his head. "You're very kind," he said, smiling, "but I've any amount to do. When you live alone, and you've only one day a week ''

"I'm sorry," said Every. "Still, if you won't "

He let in the clutch.

"Good-bye," said Anthony.
"Good-bye," cried the others.

The car slid forward.

A moment later, arrived at the top of the hill, it dropped over the crest and sank out of sight.

It was twelve days later that Mr. Peter

Every found his cake to be dough. Taking advantage of a general invitation, issued when he was six years old, he had asked himself to Bell Hammer ostensibly to enjoy a day's hunting, but in reality with the express intention of inviting Miss Valerie French to become his lady-wife.

All things considered, it was rather hard that before he had been in the house for an hour and a half he should himself have pulled his airy castle incontinently about his ears.

This was the way of it.

It was that soft insidious hour which begins when it is time to dress for dinner and ends in horrified exclamation and a rush for the bath. Valerie, seated at the piano, was playing Massenet's Elégie, and Every was lolling in a deep chair before the fire, studying a map of the county and thinking upon the morrow's hunt. In such circumstances it is not surprising that the printed appearance of Saddle Tree Cross should have remembered Lyveden.

"By the way, Val," he said, raising his voice to override the music, "I met a pal

of yours the other day."

Valerie raised her eyebrows and continued to play.

"Did you?" she said, without turning. "Who was that?"

"Major Lyveden."

The Elegie died a sudden discordant death, and Valerie started to her feet.

" Where?"

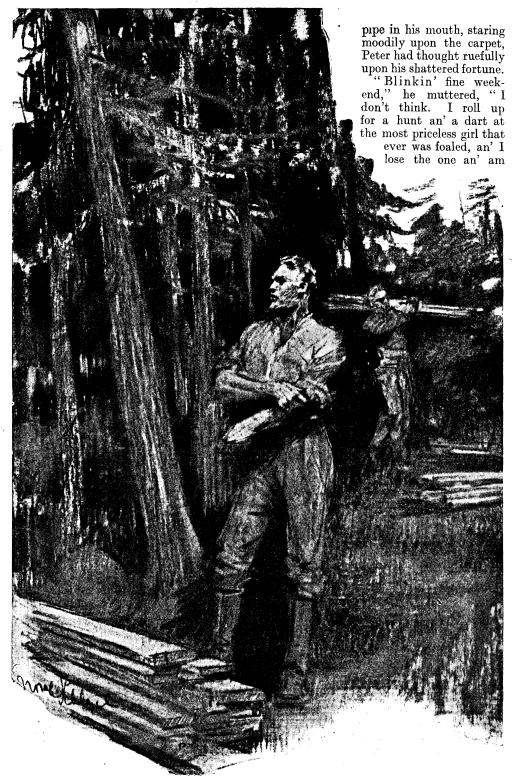
The flame of the inquiry scorched Peter Every's ears.

Dropping the map and getting uncertainly upon his feet, he demanded aggrievedly to be told what on earth was the matter....

On trying subsequently coherently to recall what had happened in the next five minutes, he found his memory pardonably confused.

Valerie had taken him by the shoulders and shaken him like a rat: she had hurled at his head an unending stream of questions -all about Lyveden—and, when he had hesitated, had shaken him again: when he had tried to protest, she had put her hand over his mouth: when she had clearly exhausted his memory, she had announced that they would go up to Town the next day, and that on Sunday morning, sun, rain, or snow, he would motor her down to where Lyveden dwelt: then she had said she was sorry she'd shaken him, smiled him a maddening smile, told him, with a rare blush, that Anthony Lyveden was "the most wonderful man in the world," kissed him between the eyes, and then darted out of the room, calling for Lady Touchstone...

Sitting that night upon the edge of his bed, with his hands in his pockets and a



"So Gramarye was to have a new girdle. For the last week Winchester and his little band

roped in to help the other to another cove." He laughed bitterly. "'Minds me of a drama-play. S'pose I'm cast for the perishin' strong man wot 'ides 'is bleedin' 'eart." He flung out a dramatic arm. "'Reenunciation, 'Erbert, 'ath its reeward.' (Loud and prolonged cheers.) Well, well. . . ." He rose to his feet and stretched luxuriously. "It's all the same in a hundred years, and so long as she's happy. . . ."

And with that little candle of truly

handsome philosophy Mr. Peter Every lighted himself to bed.

Upon the following Sunday, at a quarter before mid-day, he set Miss French down upon the London road at the spot at which he and Joan had met Lyveden a fortnight before.

"I'll wait till you've seen if he's in," he said, nodding towards the cottage. "If he is, I'll come back in an hour. That do?"

Valerie smiled and nodded. She was just twittering. Then she flung her veil back over her shoulder and stepped off the road on to the wasted track.

on to the wasted track. . . . It was a beautiful day—a handful of sweet-smelling hours filched by Winter out of the wallet of Spring. The wet earth seemed drenched with perfume; the winds kept holy-day; the sun, like a giant surprisedly refreshed, beamed with benevolence. Her knocking upon the

had been working at nothing else. A spell of fine weather favouring them, the work flew."

door of the cottage evoking no answer, Miss French decided to try the back.

The venture was fruitful.

There upon the red-brick pavement stood a small snow-white dog, whom Major Anthony Lyveden, seated upon a soap-box, was towelling vigorously.

Between the fuss of the operation and the amicable wrangle which it induced, neither of the parties heard the lady's approach. For a moment she stood spell-bound. Then she turned and waved her arm to Every, sitting still in the car fifty odd paces away. Intelligently the latter waved back. . . .

As Valerie turned, there was a scrabble of paws. Followed a sharp exclamation, and the next moment Patch was leaping frantically to lick her face, while Anthony Lyveden, who had risen to his feet, was staring at her and recoiling, towel in hand, as if he had perceived an apparition.

For the two, who had shared big moments, it was the most tremendous of all. Upon a sudden impulse that black king Fate had flung his warder up. Instantly the barriers of Time and Distance had been swept away, and Love, Shame, Fear, and a whole host of Emotions had come swarming pell-mell back into the lists—a surging, leaderless mob, thirsty to flesh their swords, quarrelling amongst themselves. . . .

Sit you there by the king, sirs, if you will watch the tourney. Climb up into his pavilion: make his grim equerries give place. I will answer for their black looks. And the king will laugh at their discomfiture. His jester for the length of my tale, I can twist the tyrant about my

little finger.

See, then, the wrangling press take order of battle. Observe the clamorous throng split into two rival companies, each of them captained by Love, with Hope and Shame on one side, and Fear and Mistrust upon the These six are the most notable; the rest you shall discover for yourselves, when issue is joined. One other knight only I beg you will remark—him in the cold grey harness, knee to knee with Mistrust, whose device is a broken bough, sirs, whom there is none to counter upon the opposite side . . . That is no one of the Emotions, but something less honest—a free-lance, gentlemen, that has ridden unasked to the jousting and cares for neither cause, but, because he will grind his own axe, ranged against Valerie. There is a fell influence behind that vizor that will play a big part this February day.

When Valerie French looked upon her lost lover, she could have wept for joy. The sight of him, indeed, rendered her inarticulate, and, before she had found her voice, came Shyness to tie up her tongue. This is important, because her sudden inability to speak upset everything.

For a month after she had known the man faithful and herself for a fool, Miss French had constantly rehearsed this meeting. Then, when she had almost lost hope that it would ever take place, the rehearsals had lost their savour . . . Forty hours ago they had been revived and conducted feverishly by day and night. She had a score of entrances, and humble opening lines to suit them all. Anthony could speak, she would have disarmed him by kneeling in the dust. The most submissive sentences her love could utter were to be laid at his feet-calls which, if his love were yet alive, must wake some echoes. Too honest, however, to make a play-actress, Valerie had reckoned without stage-fright. . . .

Lyveden was the first to recover.

"Why, Miss—Valerie," he said, "where have you sprung from?" He came to her smiling and put out his hand. "I can see by your face that I'm forgiven. I'm so glad. I hate to be at variance." Mechanically Valerie laid her hand in his. "I've got such a wonderful job here," he went on easily. "Are you just passing? Or have I time to tell you about it?"

"I'd—I'd love to hear," stammered the

girl.

Things were going all wrong. There had been nothing like this in any of her scenes.

"I'm restoring an estate," said Anthony.

"When you knew me. I was a footman

"When you knew me, I was a footman. Now I'm something between a forester, a landscape-gardener, and a roadman. This "he lifted an indicating arm—" this belongs to a Colonel Winchester. It's been let go for over a hundred years, and he and I and a few others are working to pull it round. It's just fascinating."

Valerie nodded.

"I'm glad you're happy," she said, and wondered whether that was the moment to speak her unspoken lines. Surely a better opening would present itself. Now that they could not come first, it seemed so awkward to thrust them in without any introduction. While she hesitated, the chance passed.

"I'm sure you are. Would you care to see something of the park? I'd like you to. It'll make it easier for you to under

stand what we're up against and what an amazing attraction there is in the work." Together they left the cottage and made for the track. "If we go down here for a bit, you'll get an idea of the condition of things, and then I'll show you some of the work we've done. Of course it goes slow. Five thousand acres aren't reclaimed in a day. You see. . . ."

The steady, even tone flowed with a surprising ease. Anthony could hardly believe his ears. How on earth he was able to talk so naturally he could not divine. He was, of course, putting up a tremendous The sudden appearance of Valerie had fairly staggered him. Then instinctively he had pulled himself together, and, with his head still singing from the blow, striven dazedly to ward her off. The great thing, he felt, was to keep talking . . .

Ever since his dismissal he had fought unceasingly to thrust the lady out of his mind: latterly his efforts had met with a halting success. Now, not only was all this labour utterly lost, but he was faced with a peril more terrifying than death. prospect of being haled once more unto Pisgah, the hell of viewing once again that exquisite land of promise unfulfilled, loomed big with torment. He simply could not suffer it all again. The path, no doubt, would be made more specious than ever. Oh, indubitably. And the whips which were waiting at the end of it would have become scorpions. . . . Anthony had braced himself for an immense resistance.

The devil of it was, he loved the girl so desperately that resistance pure and simple would be of no avail. He knew he could never hope to parry the thrusts those beautiful eyes, that gentle voice, were there to offer him. Once before he had tried, and failed signally. It was plain that his only chance of safety lay in attack. He must press her tirelessly. The great thing was to keep talking . . .

Thank God, there was a subject to hand. Gramarye made a wonderful topic, inviting, inexhaustible. Her blessed woods and streams, her poor blurred avenues, her crumbling roads, the piteous havoc of the proud estate stood him in splendid stead. Anthony found himself not only talking, but waxing enthusiastic. The queer conceit that Gramarye had responded to his cry for help filled him with exultation. of his grateful mouth her praise, came bubbling .

Settling himself in his saddle with a slow

smile, the Knight of the Broken Bough laid on more lustily than before.

It was Patch who unwittingly put a

spoke in the latter's wheel.

Miss French's reappearance had affected the dog powerfully. One October day he had known her for Anthony's darling, and as such had become her vassal. He had since seen no reason to withdraw his fealty. As we have seen, at her coming he had leaped for joy. Occasion and personage, however, deserved more honour than that. Ever since the three had begun their ramble, he had been scouring the undergrowth for an offering meet to be laid at the lady's shining feet. It was the way of his heart.

Not until Miss French and Lyveden were standing beside a tottering bridge, and the latter was pointing the traces of a vista which once had gladdened all eyes with its sweetness, but was now itself blind, did the little squire happen upon a treasure worthy in his sight to be bestowed. At this juncture, however, a particularly unsavoury smell attracted his straining nostrils . . . A moment later what was, despite the ravages of decomposition, still recognisable as the corpse of a large black bird was deposited with every circumstance of cheerful devotion immediately at Valerie's feet.

To ignore such a gift was impossible. Its nature and condition saw to that. To accept it was equally out of the question. tacitly to reject such a love-token needed a harder heart than Valerie's or, for the matter of that, than Anthony's, either.

Miss French gave a queer little cry of mingled distaste and appreciation, and Anthony hesitated, lost the thread of his

discourse, and stopped.

"How very sweet of you, Patch! No, I mustn't touch it because I'm not allowed dead birds. But I do thank you." She patted the panting head. "Look. Here's a stone I'll throw for you-down into the brook. I'm sure it'll be good for you to wash your mouth." She flung the pebble, and the dog went flying. Valerie turned to Lyveden with a glowing face. "Don't think I'm fishing for another dead bird, but I wish I could feel you'd forgiven me as truly as Patch. Oh, Anthony, I just can't tell you how deadly ashamed I feel, how——"

"My dear girl, you mustn't talk like this. I knew there was some misunderstanding— I didn't know what-and I---"

"I thought you cared for Anne Alison." "Oh, Valerie . . ." The wistful reproach of his tone, the sad-faced ghost of a protesting smile hovering about his lips, brought tears to Valerie's eyes. "Well, well...I'm so glad I'm cleared in your eyes. I'd 've hated you to go through life thinking that I--was like that . . . " Suddenly he caught at her arm and pointed to the ramshackle bridge. "There's another instance of the rot we're out to stop. Another winter, and that bridge'd be in the stream, damning it at the deepest and narrowest point. Result, the water's diverted and spreads all over the road, trying to find another way into its channel. No road can stand that, of course. Gradually----"

"Tell me more of yourself," said Valerie. Anthony let go her arm and put a hand to

his head.

"Myself?" he said slowly. "Well, this is my life. I live in the cottage, you know very simply. It was a wonderful stroke of luck—getting the job. I saw it in the Agony Column."

"Before or after you'd given notice?"

"After. I tell you, I was thankful. And now—I little dreamed what a wonderful billet it was. Living in these beautiful woods, with nothing to-"

"Why did you give notice?" said Valerie. "Oh, I don't know. I think I was unsettled. After all, a footman's job----"

"Was it because of me?"

There was a long silence. Then—

"Yes," said Anthony. "But that's ancient history," he added quickly. "It wasn't your fault if I chose to take that line. Besides "--he flung out demonstrative arms—" see what you've brought me, Valerie. When I think that less than three months ago I was carrying coals and washing up glasses and waiting at table——"

And in love with me," said Valerie.

Lyveden's outstretched arms fell to his

The worst had happened. Valerie was

under his guard . .

A pitiful hunted look came into the steady grey eyes. Slowly the brown right hand stole

up to his forehead.

"I never ought to have been," he said dully. "I ought to have had more sense. It was always . . . out of the question . . . utterly. I think perhaps if I'd had a job to put my back into, I'd 've . . . "

He hesitated, at a loss for an expression

which would not be ungallant.

Instantly Valeric lunged.

"You'd 've what?"

"Behaved better," he said desperately, turning back the way they had come.

Head back, eyes closed, lips parted, Valerie stood like a statue.

"Behaved . . . better?" she whispered. "Behaved . . . better?" She shivered, and, when the blue eyes opened, there was the flash of tears springing. "When you talk like that," she said quietly, "you make me feel like death. I deserve it, I know. I deserve anything. But, if you knew how it hurt, I think you'd spare me." Staring into the distance, Anthony dug his nails into his palms. "I came here to-day to pray your forgiveness. Since I—found I was wrong, I've been more utterly wretched than I thought a woman could be. I didn't know there was such agony in this world. Aunt Harriet'll bear me out, and so will the Alisons. I told them the truth. And when, after all these weeks, I found where you were, I just thanked God . . . You and I know what we were to each other. Try and put yourself in my place. Supposing you'd turned me down-because you were rotten . . ." Anthony winced." Yes, rotten. There's no other word. And then you'd found out your mistake. How would you feel?"

"I'm sure you had cause," blurted Lyveden. "It was a mistake, of course. But you couldn't know that. And I--I've nothing to forgive, dear. I've never thought ill of you—never once. I can't pretend I wasn't shaken, but I always knew there was

some mix-up."

"You were—shaken?" said Valerie.

Anthony nodded.

"You see," he explained, "I was terribly----

"Have you got over it?" said Valerie. With the point at his throat, Anthony did the only possible thing, and threw down

"No," he said steadily, "I haven't, and I don't think I ever shall."

There was a long, long silence, which the suck and gurgle of water fretting a crazy sluice-gate had to themselves. Then-

"What d'you mean?" breathed Valerie.
"I think," said Lyveden, "that I shall

love you as long as I live."

Valerie just sighed very happily. "I think," she said, standing a-tiptoe, "I'm the luckiest woman of all the ages."

Then she slid an arm through Anthony's,

and they started back...

Anthony's brain was whirling. He did not know what to think. What was worse, he did not know what to do. think he had called back Time? That he had asked her to marry him? Had he?

Were his words tantamount to that? Was he prepared to marry her-this wonderful, glorious creature stepping so joyously beside him-this peerless queen, who had wronged him, yet in his eyes could do no wrong? As once before, that touch upon his arm sent the blood singing through his veins. His pulses leaped and danced. strange joy came welling. . . . It was as if a fountain within him had begun to playan old forgotten fountain, long dry-and the sun was turning its delicate spray to a flourish of sprinkled silver. Against his better judgment he turned and looked at her. My lady felt his gaze, and turned to meet it with a swift smile. All the beauty of youth, all the tenderness of love, all the shyness of maidenhood hung in that glowing countenance. As once before, twin stars had come to light the gentle gravity of those dark blue eyes. The mouth he had kissed in anger was a red flower. . . .

The memory of that kiss came back to him with a rush He had forgotten it, somehow. He was forgiven, of course. Still, it was only right to speak of it—she had confessed her trespasses so very handsomely.

Standing still, he took hold of her hand. "Valerie, I quite forgot. The kiss I gave you that day was the kiss of a bully. I've never——"

A small cool hand covered his lips.

"Hush, lad. You mustn't say it. I know you were angry, or you'd never have done it. But that was my fault. You know it was. And "—she hesitated, and a blush came stealing to paint the wild rose red—"it's the only kiss you've ever given me, and—since then—I've been very glad of it."

For a moment Anthony stood trembling. Then he put his arm about Valerie and held her close. There was the whisper of a tremulous sigh in his ears, the warm fragrance of quick-coming breath beat upon his nostrils, the radiance of love-lit beauty flooded his eyes. Slowly he bent his head...

A wandering breeze swept out of the distance, brushed past the leafless woods, set the curtain of silence swaying, and—was gone.

Anthony started violently and threw up his head, listening. . . .

Imagination lent him her ears.

The faintest silvery ripple, the liquid echo of a cool clear call went floating out of audience. . . .

In an instant the man was transfigured.
"The trumpets!" he cried hoarsely.
"The trumpets! Didn't you hear them?"

The light in his eyes was fanatic. Instinctively Valerie shrank away. Regardless, he let her go. "I forgot. Gramarye—I'm pledged to her. It's too late, Valerie. Oh, why did you come?" He buried his face in his hands. "You'll never understand," he muttered. "I know you never will. It's no good—no good..." Suddenly he stood upright and took off his hat. Then he smiled very tenderly and shook his head. "It's too late, Valerie—my sweet—my darling.... Too late..."

He turned and strode down the track

towards the tottering bridge.

For a moment Patch stood looking from him to the girl, uncertain and puzzled. Then he went scampering in Anthony's wake.

"As soon as you've finished, Lyveden, we'll have that fir down. It's the only way. With that list on her, she may go any day. And, when she does, as like as not she'll push half the bank into the road."

Anthony, who was munching bread and meat, nodded agreement. His employer got up and strolled in the direction from which the crunch of wheels upon a rough road argued the approach of a supply of posts

and rails.

The fence about the estate was going up. It was indeed high time. What was left of the old paling was in evil case. Worm and rot had corrupted with a free hand. There was hardly a chain, all told, that merited repair. So Gramarye was to have a new girdle. For the last week Winchester and his little band had been working at nothing else. A spell of fine weather favouring them, the work flew. Master and men worked feverishly, but, for once in a way, without relish. The industry of the gnome was still there, but it had become nervous.

The reason for this must be made clear. Always, till now, the little company had laboured in secret. The thick, dark, lonely woods of Gramarye had sheltered all they did. No strange, unsympathetic eyes had ever peered at their zeal, curious and hostile. This was as well. They had—all ten of them—a freemasonry which the World would not understand. They were observing rites which it was not seemly that the World should watch. Hitherto they had toiled in a harbour at which the World did not touch. Knowing naught else, they had come to take their privacy for granted. Now suddenly this precious postulate had been withdrawn. Since well-nigh the whole of the estate

was edged by road, the erection of the fence at once cost them seclusion and showed

them how dear they valued it.

All day long the World and his Wife passed by, kindly, mocking, or silent-but always curious. The little fellowship became resentfully self-conscious . . . Old wounds reopened; forgotten infirmities lifted up their heads. The three great sailors remembered that they were deaf. The little engineer noticed his trailing leg. The lean, greyheaded joiner thought of the wife who had left him: his fellow recalled the cries of a dying child. Anthony minded Miss French. Only the two old carters were spared the ordeal, their labour keeping them busy under the cover of the woods. Winchester himself felt the unusual exposure most of But that the fence was to give them the fee-simple of privacy, he would have abandoned the enterprise. It was not that he was ashamed, but, as an atelier, he had no use for a house-top. "Working in a shopwindow," he styled it. If he detested publicity, his resentment of idle curiosity was painfully apparent. Once or twice, indeed, he had broken out and, in a voice of thunder, bade loiterers begone. Happily they had always obeyed . . .

Anthony finished his lunch, gave a few pieces to Patch, quenched his thirst with a draught of well-water out of an old beerbottle, and got upon his feet. Winchester had not reappeared, so he strolled across to the fir tree which had been marked for destruction. As usual, his employer was perfectly right. It would be idle to carry the paling along this piece of bank and leave the tree standing to menace fence and foundation. The sooner it was out of the way, the

better.

He crossed to where the sailors were crowded about the engineer, who was drawing a rough diagram upon the sawn face of timber to illustrate some argument. Hard by, upon a log, the joiners were smoking and conversing in a low tone.

"Where are the axes, Blake? The Colonel

and I are going to fell that fir."

The grey-headed joiner rose and stepped to a rough litter covered by a tarpaulin. The latter, being turned back, displayed a travelling armoury of tools. As he lifted two axes out of their slots, Winchester came thrusting out of the undergrowth.

"Ready, Lyveden?" he queried. "Right."
Anthony flung off his coat, made Patch
fast to a convenient bush—you could not be
too careful when trees were falling—and took

an axe out of the carpenter's hand. The sailors had disappeared in the direction of the waggon. A moment later the two exofficers were felling the tree.

It was Winchester's whim to use an axe where he could. He delighted in the pastime, and his tremendous physique enabled him to make such play with the tool as could few men who were not experts. Under his guidance, Anthony had proved an apt pupil, and the two, working together, could send a soft-wood tree toppling in no time. So engaged, they made a wonderful picture. Had any passed by at this moment, they might have been pardoned for staring.

At his fourth stroke, Anthony misjudged the angle, and his axe stuck. As he leaned forward to lever it out of the wood, there was the whirr of steel falling, and he flung himself back with a cry. The other had struck without waiting for him to get clear.

As an error of judgment, the thing was inexplicable. A child of six would have known better. And an axe was no pop-gun.

For a moment he stared at Winchester like a man in a dream.

His employer blinked back . . .

Then his eyes narrowed.

"You're getting curious, are you?" he said thickly.

In spite of himself, Anthony started.

Loosely nursing his implement, the other took a step to one side. There was not much in the movement, but it placed him between Lyveden and the road.

Anthony kept his eyes riveted upon the powerful hands playing with the haft of the axe . . .

Twenty paces away a saw was going. Raised above the din could be heard the engineer's voice calling for the return of his pencil. A distant clatter of timber told that the waggon was being unloaded.

Anthony moistened his lips.

For another pair of eyes he would have given anything. Any moment now he would have to jump—one way or the other. It did not matter which. The going was equally bad. But if he met an obstruction—caught his foot in a root—fell among briers at the outset, he knew he was doomed. The impulse to glance to one side was terrible. Yet he dared not take his eyes from those terrible itching fingers. If only one of the men . . .

The noise of the saw stopped, and a piece of wood fell with a thud. Blake's voice was heard asking the whereabouts of his rule. The answer was inaudible, but the next

moment somebody started to move in the direction of the fir. As they passed Patch, they chirruped.

In an instant the axe leapt to Winchester's

shoulder, and Anthony jumped . . .

A moment later Blake parted the bushes, to see his employer wrench free an axe which had bitten into the ground, and hurl

"I was going to kneel down in the mud and refuse to get up. . . . But, from what you tell me, there's apparently nothing for me to kneel for.' 'Nothing whatever,' said her niece."

himself after Lyveden, who was on his feet again and running steadily about six paces ahead.

For a second the fellow stared stupidly. Then he let out a yell and started in pursuit.

The two ex-officers were evenly matched. If Anthony was the lighter and younger, Winchester had run for Oxford. Moreover, the latter knew the woods like the back of his hand. Anthony, who did not, ran

blindly. This was not a moment to pick and choose. All the time he was desperately afraid of mire . . .

Briers tore at his legs, saplings whipped him across the face, a bough stabbed at his eyes and, as he turned, scored his brow savagely: a rabbit-hole trapped his foot and sent him flying, but he caught at a

friendly trunk and swung round to find his balance and a new line before him. So quick was the turn, that the giant behind him lost the yard he had gained. Down through a grey beechwood, over a teeming brook, into a sodden drift of

leaves, up through a welter of bracken, on to the silence of pine-needles, over the top of the ridge into the cursed undergrowth again, panting, straining, sobbing for breath, his temples bursting, his hands and arms bleeding, unutterable agony in his side, Lyveden tore like a madman. The pace was too awful to last. Always the terror behind clung to his heels.

They were flying downhill now, and the giant's weight was telling. On the opposite side of the valley was another pinewood. If he could only reach that, between the good going and the up-gradient Anthony felt that there was a bare chance. The thing behind, however, was coming up.

The slope grew steeper . . . precipitous. . . With a shock, Lyveden realised that the giant must be almost above him, that he had only to drop. . . With a frightful effort he

swerved. A tangle of matted thorn bushes opposed him. Frantically he smashed his way through, kicking desperately at the suckers, plunging to find a footing—a holding—anything. For a moment he trod the air. Then he fell heavily, head first, into a ditch. . . .

Only the sight of the road before him and the firm brown carpet beyond could have got him upon his feet. Dazed and winded, he staggered across into the pinewood and started to struggle up the slope . . .

A sudden thought came to him, and he glanced over his shoulder. The next moment he was leaning against a tree-trunk, gazing down into the road.

Winchester was flat upon his face, spreadeagled, scrabbling with his nails upon the roadway and cursing horribly. He seemed to be endeavouring to haul himself across. Had the road been a wall, you would have said he was trying to scale it.

He had made no progress by the time the others arrived, and was easily secured. Then ropes were sent for, and two of his magnificent sailors lashed his arms to his

The end of a conversation held this same evening in the hall of Bell Hammer may be recorded.

"He's not himself, Aunt Harriet. There's something wrong. Nobody could have been more gentle-or handsome. He was just wonderful. And then . . ." Valerie broke off and shrugged her shoulders helplessly. "His work and the place itself-Gramarye, he calls it—seem to have got into his blood. You never saw such enthusiasm. It was unnatural."

"Anthony Lyveden," said Lady Touch-

stone, "is not the man to go mad."

"I know. But he ought to see somebody —a doctor. There was the queerest light in his eyes . . . And he spoke strangely, as if he heard things. Who's the great man for—for brain trouble?"

"Sperm," said Lady Touchstone placidly. "But you're racking my brains for nothing.

Anthony Lyveden's not-"

"I know he isn't!" cried Valerie. "That's what makes me certain there's something wrong. He's doing something, or taking something, or being given something, that's affecting his mind. It's not internal: it's some outside influence. he didn't care, it'd be different. But he does. He said so. But he didn't seem to have room for me and the estate at the same time. It had to be one or the other. It was like a bad dream—past dispute, but illogical."

"I should write to John Forest," said her aunt. "Ask him to come and stay. He's a wise man. I don't feel equal to telling you what to do. I don't know what to tell you. If you'd come back and said that he wouldn't see you, I was going to

Chorley Wood——"

"Chipping Norton," corrected Valerie. "Well, Chipping Norton - myself. was going to kneel down in the mud and refuse to get up. I was going to wear that blue face-cloth that we both hate. I'd got it all worked out. But, from what you tell me, there's apparently nothing for me to

"Nothing whatever," said her niece. "He's given me everything, and—I've come

empty away," she added miserably.

Lady Touchstone rose and stooped to kiss

the girl tenderly.

kneel for."

"Take my advice," she said, " and write to John Forest to-night. And now don't fret. You're a thousand times better off than you were four days ago. For one thing, you know where he is. What's more, he's content to let bygones be bygones. darling, you've much to be thankful for. And now go and take a hot bath, and try and get a nap before dinner. Poor child, you must be dead tired."

With a sudden movement Valerie threw

her arms about her aunt's neck.

"I don't know why you're so good to me," she said.

Then she kissed her swiftly and, getting upon her feet, passed up the broad stairs.

For a moment Lady Touchstone stood looking after her niece. Then she put a hand to her head and sank into a chair. She was profoundly worried. If any girl other than Valerie had come to her with such an account, she would have been less troubled. But Valerie was so very clear-headed. True, her love had got away with her, and she had had the very deuce of a fall. But she was up again now, and nothing like that would ever happen again. Her judgment was back in its seat as firm as ever. And when she said that something was wrong with Anthony, that he seemed to hear things, that there was "the queerest light in his eyes," Lady Touchstone knew that it was perfectly true. What was worse, she was entirely satisfied that these things meant brain trouble. For three months after his wife had died, Valerie's own father had been under surveillance for precisely similar symptoms. She remembered them fearfully. And this Major Lyveden was so reminiscent of poor Oliver. His voice, his manner, the very way his hair grew about his temples, reminded her strangely of her dead brother. It was not surprising that she attributed Anthony's condition to a somewhat similar cause. What troubled her most was her conscience. She had set

her heart upon the match, and she was now uncertain whether it was not her clear duty to try to call it off.

After a little she rose and crossed to a table. Taking a sheet of notepaper, she began to write.

DEAR WILLOUGHBY.

I think it probable that within a few days your secretary will make an appointment for you to see a Miss Valerie French. This is my niece. She does not know we are friends. When she tells you her tale, you need make no allowance for hysteria. Believe every word she says. She will not exaggerate. And please remember this. It is most desirable that she should marry the man about whom she will consult you. But it is still more desirable that she should not marry a madman.

Yours always sincerely, HARRIET TOUCHSTONE.

Then she selected an envelope and addressed it to

Sir Willoughby Sperm, Bart., 55, Upper Brook Street, Mayfair.

After a nightmare three days, work at Gramarye was again in full swing. Anthony's succession to Winchester had been accepted without a murmur. If the men displayed any feeling, it was that of relief. When he had told them that nothing whatever would be changed, shown them his Power of Attorney, explained that he was a steward sworn to continue the work till—till his employer should have recovered, they had stared upon the ground like schoolboys and stammeringly requested an assurance that things would go just the same. Reassured, they had nodded approval and exchanged gratulatory glances. Then they had gone about their business.

Anthony's task was less simple. Apart from his compliance with the Law—a painful and embarrassing ordeal, which Mr. Plowman fussily stage-managed, dressing every detail with such importance that the layman's wonder melted gradually to a profound contempt—there was much to be learned. That all was in beautiful order saved the situation. And a letter, addressed to him in Winchester's bold handwriting, proved a master-key to the mysteries of income and outgoings.

Bank. There's three hundred on deposit at the Bank. That's to cover the immediate expense of putting me away. Now look at Sheet 7. That's last year's balance-sheet. That'll show you I was well within my income. All the

same, expenses will have to be cut—to provide for me. The wages must stand, and so must the "Horses and Stabling" (Book 2). Don't part with the roan. There'll be times when you'll have to go to Town, as I did, for odd accessories. "Tools and Materials" (Book 3) will have to suffer, but we're well set up now, so you ought to pull through. . . .

There was an invitation, too, to live at the mansion, which Anthony did not accept. Twice a week he would visit the office and work there faithfully, but he could not

bring himself to live in the house.

Apart from the manner in which the blow had been dealt him, he felt the loss of his employer most bitterly. He found the tragedy even more piteous than terrible. That so rude an axe should have been laid so untimely to the root of so glorious a tree filled him with sorrow. That the tree should have heard the step of the woodman on his way to the felling haunted his memory.

So far, however, as Lyveden's health of mind was concerned, itself grievously inopportune, the catastrophe could not have happened at a more opportune moment. Treading upon the heels of his encounter with Valerie, it made a terrific counterirritant to the violent inflammation which that meeting had set up. Yet if the back of the sickness was broken, disorder and corrective, alike so drastic, were bound seriously to lower the patient's tone. splendid physical condition supported its brother Mind and saw him well of his faintness, but the two red days left their mark. Looking back upon them later, Anthony found them made of the stuff of which dreams are woven - bitter, monstrous dreams, wherein the impossible must be performed lest a worse thing befall and a malignant eye peers beneath stones which even Misery herself would leave unturned. How he had parted with Valerie, he was uncertain. He could not remember her going. Of her coming he knew nothing at all. She had appeared and, he supposed, disappeared. Of Winchester's attack upon him, and the subsequent chase, his memory was clearer. How he had escaped, however, at the foot of the brier-clad slope, he could not conceive. He could have sworn that for the last thirty paces the man was not ${
m three}$ feet behind. . . .

He was thankful to get back to work, and plainly immensely relieved to find that, during his absence, the others had made such progress with the paling that the scene of his employer's seizure had been left well behind.

A week had clapsed since that cloud-burst, and, as before, Lyveden was finishing his lunch, when he noticed that Stokes, the second carpenter, had not returned. The fellow had gone to his quarters, to fetch some implement, nearly an hour before. When another half-hour had gone by, Anthony, in some impatience, dispatched Blake for the tool. Twenty minutes later the latter returned, chisel in hand, but with no news of his mate. When it was five o'clock and there was still no sign of Stokes, Anthony struck work and ordered an organised search. It seemed rather hopeless, but, on the whole, the best thing to do. The man was missing. If possible, more zealous than any, it was unthinkable that he was playing truant. He could not have been spirited away. Anthony supposed gloomily that he had met with a mishap. There was, indeed, no other solution.

It was getting quite dark when they found him down in a little dell upon a patch of greensward. Considering that he was a joiner, and not a sexton, he had made remarkable progress with a very creditable grave, which, he explained, was to receive the dead with which the woods were distributed. He added that it was a disgrace to leave so many corpses lying about, and pointed out that he had removed his boots for fear of treading upon them.

When they sought to humour him, he became suspicious and violent, and there was quite a struggle before he was over-

powered.

The eighth story in this series will appear in the next number.



THE WALK.

AS I walked through the ranked corn, The sun in eastern cradle born I saw not. Worry dogged my mind, Yelping before, snapping behind. Sighting o'erhead the cloudy fleece, I smoothed my wrinkled cloak of peace, Called Worry straight to heel; the cur Slunk back, not daring now to stir.

Then noted I the youngling sun.

Make for the peaks of noon at run

At first he seemed no bigger than

A mustard flower, but as he ran,

Lo! the flower grew and branched, and seemed

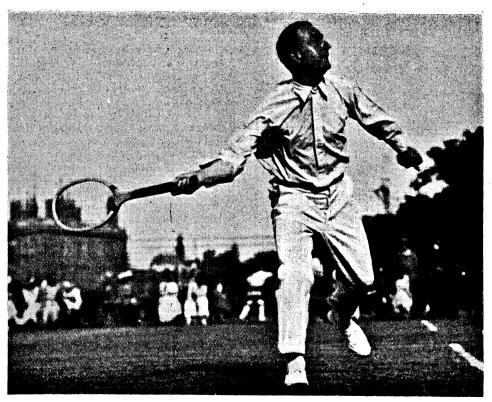
A topless tree, till Heaven teemed

With bloom of gold, the spilth whereof

Filled my whole world with warmth and love.

The fields and lanes I walked that morn Were Heaven's lanes and fields of corn.

THOMAS SHARP.



R. LYCETT,

British Isles International; former Australasian Doubles Champion.

THE PRESENT POPULARITY OF LAWN TENNIS

FAMOUS PLAYERS' VIEWS ON THE MODERN VOGUE OF THE GAME

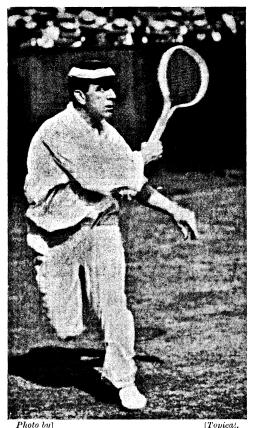
With a Foreword by HERBERT L. BOURKE

Photographs by Sport & General

CAN recall the lean years of Wimbledon, when a solitary reporter would stroll down at sunset and collect a few scores, and the papers which condescended to spare a couple of inches edified us with the information that "play was resumed yesterday with the following results."

There were spectators, of course—a few hardy enthusiasts who retained their faith in the future of a game much maligned, and ridiculed as a pastime for gardenparties.

What of the Wimbledon of to-day? All reserved seats sold six months ahead,



H. ROPER BARRETT,

British Isles International; Three Times Doubles Champion.

and thousands crowded out during the Championship meeting! And as the Wimbledon of to-morrow, the new championship ground is to have stand accommodation for 16,000 people in the centre court, and room for many thousands more at the "surround" courts. My only fear is that it will not be large enough, for the game is spreading its tentacles in remarkable fashion.

The extraordinary vogue the game enjoys at Queen's Club, Roehampton, Hurlingham, Phyllis Court, the London Country Club and other fashionable centres, marks it as a great Society game, and there have now been instituted championships of the Royal Navy, the Army, and the Royal Air Force. From all parts of the country, and almost every phase of our social life, the story of the growing ascendancy of lawn tennis as a national pastime is the same.

Tournament entries have doubled or trebled everywhere. Provision has to be

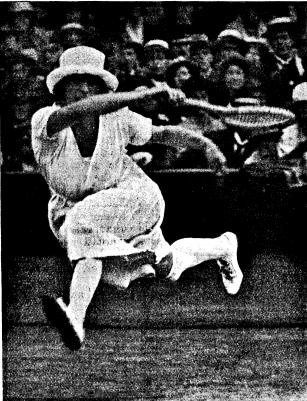
made for everybody, and in the junior events it is no uncommon thing to see quite young children disporting themselves with rackets almost as big as their bodies. One of these days -depend upon it -a youngster will be born with a racket in his mouth, instead of a silver spoon, and then we shall be blessed with that treasure we have sought for so long—another Doherty.

Whether or no we discover another Doherty to regain our lost laurels, the game, as a game, seems destined to go forward. Nearly every club in the kingdom has a waiting list, and municipalities are unable to keep pace with the demand for public courts for the democracy.

As in England, so it is a broad—a big boom everywhere. The cosmopolitan aspect of the game has been accentuated by this year's



M. J. G. RITCHIE, British Isles International; Twice Doubles Champion.



MDLLE. LENGLEN,
World's Champion, Ladies' Singles;
Ladies' Doubles, with Miss Ryan;
Mixed Doubles, with G. L. Patterson.

record of twelve challenging nations for the Davis Cup, now held by America. Japan, Czecho-Slovakia, the Philippines, Spain, the Argentine, India, and Denmark are in the lists for the first time: South Africa will doubtless re-enter next year, and in due course Russia, Sweden, Italy, China and Portugal are expected to play their parts, whilst New Zealand, hitherto linked up with Australia, contemplate competing as a separate nation. To capture the world, as it were, lawn tennis must have great merits, and its crowning achievement will perhaps be seen when the barriers of prejudice at the Public Schools are broken down. After years of boycott, some of the Public

Schools are capitulating; the game is forcing itself in, and its possibilities will be limitless when the complete surrender comes.

What are the secrets of this phenomenal growth of one game in comparison with all others in recent days? Some famous players, to whom I am greatly indebted, express their views in the accompanying pages, and it is interesting to note that Charles Hierons, the Queen's Club coach, in his book "How to Learn Lawn Tennis," summarises the situation as follows:

- 1. Its social side.
- 2. Its environment.
- 3. The continual movement and call for the con-



MRS. FRANKLIN MALLORY,
American Lady Champion.

centration that takes the mind off business worries and other cares.

4. A growing appreciation of the game's value to health, as an exercise in which the

The game's popularity in a spectacular sense has, of course, been greatly enhanced by the expansion of the international interest. Overseas players at

Wimbledon have brought with them new ideas, and at so cosmopolitan a meeting there is provided a most fascinating study in styles and temperaments. Furthermore, the game generally has speeded up, and its modern athletic attributes have done much to remove the reproach that lawn tennis is "not a man's game." Manly men who have played it have also played "the greater game," and now repose in heroes' graves.

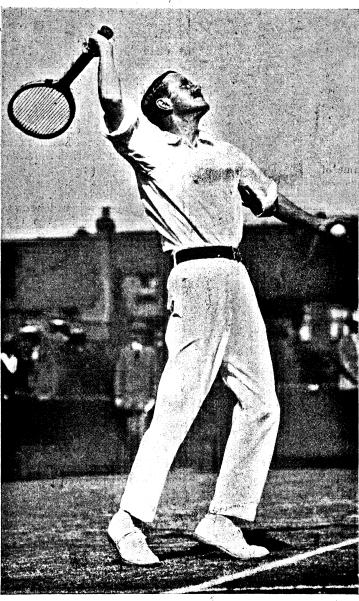
It has well been said that a peculiar merit of lawn tennis is that it can be enjoyed when badly played. That is very true, but I venture to observe that one of the greatest secrets of its rapid rise is a more general appreciation of the possibilities and beauties of the game. Thousands of players do not yet realise these things, but many more thousands do than was the case not very many years ago.

THEN AND NOW.

By W. C. Crawley, British Isles International.

THE difference between the old days and the new in lawn tennis could not be better

illustrated than by the fact that when the famous W. J. Hamilton won the Championship in 1890, he achieved the dignity of being reported in *The Times* in four lines. The game's present popularity is largely attributable to the fact that in one hour



A. W. GORE,

British Isles International; Former Singles and Doubles Champion.

wise player will attune his game to his physical capacity.

5. It does not necessarily make a severe demand upon time.

6. The game's convenient adaptability to a small area.

a player can get as much exercise as he wants. As an exercise for all the muscles of the body, lawn tennis is supreme, and serious matches not only provide a physical test, but also a battle of wits. In this latter respect it has an advantage over golf, as both men are playing the same ball; you do not merely play your own game, but the other fellow's game as well.

I do not think the full possibilities of the game have yet been realised. It is always developing, and one of its charms for players and spectators is that it is a game of "perpetual motion". It is also

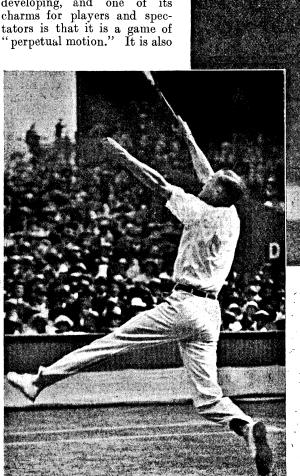


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W. T. TILDEN,

World's Singles Champion; American International.

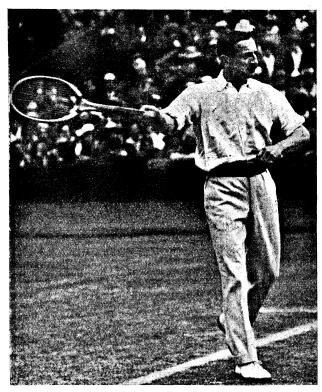


A. H. GOBERT,

French International; Covered Courts
Champion.

popular because it requires fewer implements than most games, and, even despite the rise in prices, it is still a comparatively cheap game.

It has been charged against lawn tennis that it is a selfish game, whereas in doubles we have the essence of unselfishness, whilst so far from a man merely playing for himself, he can play for his club, his county, and his country. To my mind, much greater store should be set on team matches of all kinds than on tournament play, and I am glad to note that the Lawn Tennis Association is encouraging what might be termed



MAJOR A. R. F. KINGSCOTE, British Isles International.

the team spirit in the public parks. M. E. McLoughlin and W. M. Johnston, America's famous internationals, both served their novitiate on public courts, where they were discovered, and then brought along in the right way. It is up to us to discern the natural player in the humbler sphere of the game, and then make a point of cultivating him. I feel certain that lurking behind the scenes we have some McLoughlins, Johnstons, and Tildens in the making.

THE PRESENT BOOM

By H. ROPER BARRETT,

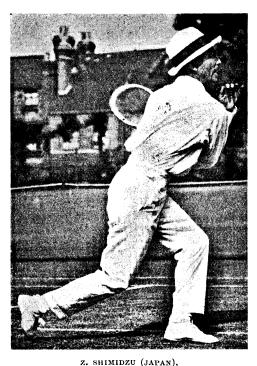
Doubles Champion 1909, 1912, and 1913 and British Isles International.

Boom! Why, it is more like a craze! You know what crazes are—the dancing craze, the skating craze, and the ping-pong craze, and other crazes—so who can tell whether there might not be a snap at any time? Not that I consider this very likely, because no other popular game has so strong a social side, to which I mainly attribute the increasing clientèle of lawn

tennis, in which boys and girls can play together, and the social and fraternal element is so pronounced in every sphere of the game.

Lawn tennis has been termed "Everybody's Game," but I question whether the Public Schools will ever give it serious recognition; tradition counts for so much with them. But, generally speaking, lawn tennis will continue to be immensely popular, as, whether well played or indifferently played, it is a great spreader of happiness, and there could be nothing better in the way of fresh-air exercise to solve the problem of "How to Keep Fit at Fifty."

I should, of course, like to see new champions arise to uphold the honour of the British Isles, but the primary thing, from my point of view, is not so much the capture of championships, but that the spirit of English sport should be unimpaired. That is a national



Z. SHIMIDZO (JAPAN),

All-Comers Finalist in last year's Championship



MRS. LARCOMBE,

Holder Ladies' Doubles All England Championship with Miss Ryan; Ladies' Singles Champion, 1912.

asset of value far beyond all the prizes. If in this spirit we can come out on top, well and good, but I would rather we lost than that we should specialise to such an extent as to make of what should be a sport an irksome task—just a job to be done.

A CONTINUAL GROWTH

By S. N. Doust, Australasian International.

Not so much would I attribute the present popularity of lawn tennis to a "boom" as to the continual growth that was manifest before the War. After the War there was an impression that we had gone "tennis mad," but that was accounted for by the reaction

that affected all forms of sport.

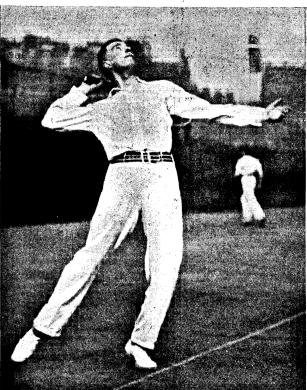
One reason why lawn tennis has attained such high favour is the gradual education of the masses and the more general realisation that it is a game that combines skill and endurance.

In the second place, through the Davis Cup Competition, it has become an international game. Cricket is international, but up to the present is played mainly by English-speaking nations.

In lawn tennis, however, we have Asiatic countries as well, and the coming together of these diverse temperaments, each producing strokes in different ways, must necessarily evolve a better game when



MRS. LAMBERT CHAMBERS,
Seven times Lady Champion—a record.



W. C. CRAWLEY,

British Isles International.

the best of each is blended with the best of ours.

In England, while few new champions have been actually found since 1905, there are many more firstclass players to-day than there were in that year. Tournaments, increasing year by year, engender the spirit of competition, and the "rabbits" are entering the open events as a matter of course. By so doing they improve the standard of their game, and while many do not possess the instinct that is necessary to rise above a good handicap player, there are some who become really Consequently first-class. there are more good players to-day, from whom, I trust, in the near future will arise more than one world's champion.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE.

By F. Gordon Lowe, British Isles International.

THE first reason why lawn tennis is so phenomenally popular in 1921 is because it is by far the best of all ball games and the most difficult. It was only a question of time when it was bound to come into its own. To see the game played well looks so easy; but the aspiring player soon realises its tremendous difficulties, and herein lies its main attraction.



s. N. DOUST,

Australasian International.

The game is accessible to most, as only four players are required to make up a set, and courts of different surfaces and competitions are to be found in any corner of England, or the world, for that matter.

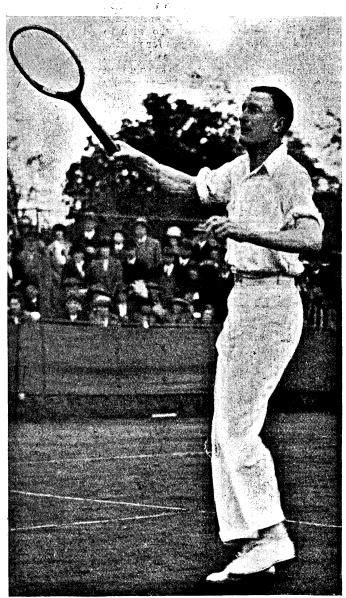
Healthy exercise can be obtained in a short space of time; it takes one out in the open air and exercises every muscle in the body, and it is the ideal game for all classes. I know men of sixty-five who still play a good game, so lawn tennis can be termed an elixir of youth, and should be played

regularly by all. Lawn tennis has the great advantage that women can join in and hold their own, and not find it dangerous. International competition and the Davis Cup have undoubtedly added enormously to the popularity and public interest. Every Continental and Colonial player of note has visited these shores in quest of the Davis Cup and other honours, and we, in turn, have sent out teams representing Old England to the Colonies, Europe, and America. In the watching crowds year by year at Wimbledon and other places has been born the wish to learn and compete in the game.

The advent of Mdlle. Lenglen has created world-wide interest, and it is the ambition of every rising girl player one day to lower the colours of the French champion. Clerks and office boys now rush out, after hours, to the nearest available tennis court or apology for one, so who knows that a Tilden may not develop from one of these?

I consider that the publicity given to lawn tennis in the Press has done wonders to advertise the game throughout the length and breadth of the world. The Dohertys caused a big upward move;

then came Wilding and Brookes, who gave it another great fillip. After that the War came, and lawn tennis was found one of the best ways of keeping fit, and a relaxation from war-weariness.



F. GORDON LOWE,

British Isles International.

After the War, people found they could not go back to their pre-War sedentary lives, and lawn tennis met their urgent needs for fresh air and exercise. Finally Tilden's meteoric appearance on the centre court last year lit a lawn tennis flame never to be extinguished.

Out of this popularity—which means numbers—cannot the powers that be set to work to find our budding champion? He must be there; let him be unearthed and taken in hand at once. I am all for making it possible for those who wish to play the game to do so, and not for putting difficulties in the way, otherwise keenness will die, and we shall be back to the old lean days. Let us have more courts—especially hard ones-more clubs, more tournaments, and more matches of every description. Let every club, however small, arrange two or three matches a week, with singles included. This would relieve the tournament congestion, and players would be able to uphold the honour of their various clubs in matches, leagues, and other competitions for all grades. As it is only up at Wimbledon that the real tournament congestion occurs, could not two tournaments in different areas of London be arranged for each week? What about an order of play made out daily, starting at 9.30 a.m., and no player to be called upon both morning and afternoon? Why not allot ten days to a tourna-



MISS K. McKANE,

An English representative in the Olympic Games at
Antwerp last year.



MISS RYAN,

Holder Ladies' Doubles World Championship with Mdlle. Lengten; All England Ladies' Doubles with Mrs. Larcombe.

ment instead of six, or limit your events to open singles and doubles, handicap mixed and handicap doubles. Never limit your entries, except at Wimbledon. Give the "rabbit" every chance of playing when, where, and how he likes; lawn tennis owes a lot to him.

A FRENCHMAN'S VIEW.

By André Gobert,

French Champion and International.

THE game's inherent qualities account in the main for the popularity of lawn tennis. It is a splendid game, and loved by all who touch a racket, and an ideal exercise for boys and girls, and also for those who are wise enough to keep in touch with it up to middle age or beyond. It is a game in which the fighting spirit in one can have full play in a happy alliance with courtesy and sportsmanship.

135

The big doings at Wimbledon have played a very important part in the rise of lawn tennis. People who formerly did not play have attended Wimbledon as an annual function, and have been so impressed with the great matches there that they have taken to the game themselves. Many misconceptions as to the merits of lawn tennis, and many reproaches, have been removed by the opportunities afforded at Wimbledon of seeing the game properly played and manfully played.

Lawn tennis in France is still suffering from the War. The boom is great among players, but there is not a corresponding increase in the number of courts. There are still many things more serious for which our country needs all the energies of its men and women, and there is not so much money for sport. You in England, immune from the devastations of the War, are more fortunate, and it seems that wherever a bit of grass grows, a lawn tennis court grows with it.

England has always been a sporting nation, and as English people find sport a necessity, can you wonder that the games continue to grow, and especially this fine game I love so well? I wonder you have not more good young players. The tendency seems to be merely to "play to play," and not to play to improve. Why not both?

THE TEST OF TIME.

By M. J. G. RITCHIE,

Doubles Champion 1908 and 1910, and British Isles International.

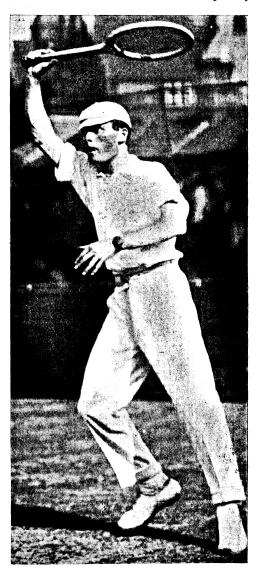
LAWN tennis has risen to its present eminence in the world of sport purely and simply on its intrinsic merits as a game of skill and exercise most attractively combined. There is something particularly fascinating in hitting a tennis ball over a net, with its height so skilfully adjusted, in connection with the dimensions of the court, as to make what might have been an easy game a difficult one.

There is no other game or sport I know—and I have played most—that, in its variety and possibilities, offers the same capacity for healthy enjoyment, nor do I see, except in one or two minor details, how it could be improved upon, or that anything better as a game could be thought out.

It has stood the test of time, for net, dimensions of the court, and accessories, are very much the same now as when I played the game over forty years ago; but

the old idea that it was a girls' game only, was knocked on the head as soon as it was realised that to play it seriously necessitated training and fitness.

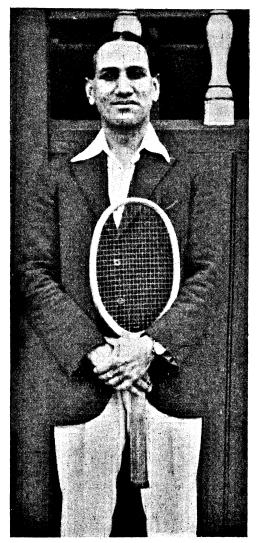
This being the case, in these days of shorter business hours, and consequently



B. I. C. NORTON,
South African International.

more time to devote to recreation, the boom in lawn tennis is not in the least likely to diminish, but rather to increase year by year, for there is nothing else so good, or likely to be, to take its place. The introduction of hard and covered courts has made it much more an all-the-yearround game than formerly, and the enthusiasm with which it is played all over the Continent and, in fact, the world, needs no emphasis from me.

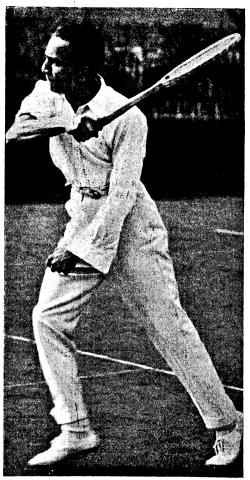
The British Isles for the moment are not "top dog" in the lawn tennis world. We are not far behind, but our present best in the game are mostly older players who have reached their best and whose possibilities can be pretty well gauged. We lack younger players of real promise, and until the prejudice against playing lawn tennis in our schools is done away with, I am afraid we



DR. A. H. FYZEE.

Two distinguished representatives of India's Lawn Tennis who have achieved success in English tournaments.

shall continue to do so. Things, however, in this direction look like improving vastly, and as the physique of British boys and



A. A. FYZEE.

girls is second to none in the world, there is no reason why we should not, with time and the encouragement of the game amongst the youngsters, regain the laurels that within the past few years have gone elsewhere.

THE PROBLEM OF THE SCHOOLS.

By A. W. GORE,

Singles Champion 1901, 1908, and 1909, and British Isles International.

You ask me whether I think what is termed the lawn tennis "boom" will last. I have no doubt that it will, but I should

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like to see the general standard of play improve in a manner commensurate with the growth of the game. Compared with the first-class players, the number of "rabbits" is appallingly enormous, and with the continued opening out of the international aspect, it is up to us seriously to look to our laurels.

The remedy would appear to rest with the development of the game in the schools—that is, the real game, and not the mere patting of a ball over a net without any appreciation of tactics or even the elemen-

tary principles of stroke production.

Many years ago I offered a cup for competition among the Public Schools, and it was refused; but recently, whilst in Denmark, I made a similar offer to the Danish Lawn Tennis Association, which was accepted. There lawn tennis is a popular school game, and I was deeply impressed with the wonderfully promising form of the boys, who would beat the majority of our youngsters hollow.

The early and the proper beginning is one of the secrets of the success of those nations which in recent years have wrested the chief honours of the game from us. As to the development of the game, I do not see that it has advanced very considerably since the old days, except in the specialisation in service. Many players endeavour to specialise so much in this direction, in order to be up-to-date, that they neglect many of the finer arts of the all-round match-winning game with which the late H. L. Doherty used to excel. If our younger players would more freely strive to emulate that great master, we should not go far wrong in our endeavours to restore our international prestige.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS.

By F. L. RISELEY,

British Isles International and former Doubles Champion.

THERE was a boom in lawn tennis before the War which I think was largely due to :--

1. The public's realising what an excellent form of exercise the game provided which could be procured in the minimum amount of time, and

2. The game being enjoyed more than of old owing to better attention being given to the provision of grass and hard courts with adequate run-back, etc.

So much attention was given in training, during the War, to games, that the ex-soldier

has now developed a greater love for physical exercise and games. He is now able to play his lawn tennis on the good courts which are provided by the local corporations in their parks and open spaces.

With regard to England's status in the future, I think the outlook is much brighter than it has been for a very long time, as the Public Schools are rapidly realising that the game has its advantages, and can be safely played without injury to cricket.

EVERYBODY'S GAME.

By Mrs. E. W. LARCOMBE,

Lady Champion, 1912.

WHETHER the late Mr. Willett ever played lawn tennis I do not know, but all those who do play should bless his memory. His Daylight Saving Bill is undoubtedly one of the causes of the present boom. Formerly the most ardent devotees of the game were mainly people of leisure; now the workers have a chance of playing regularly.

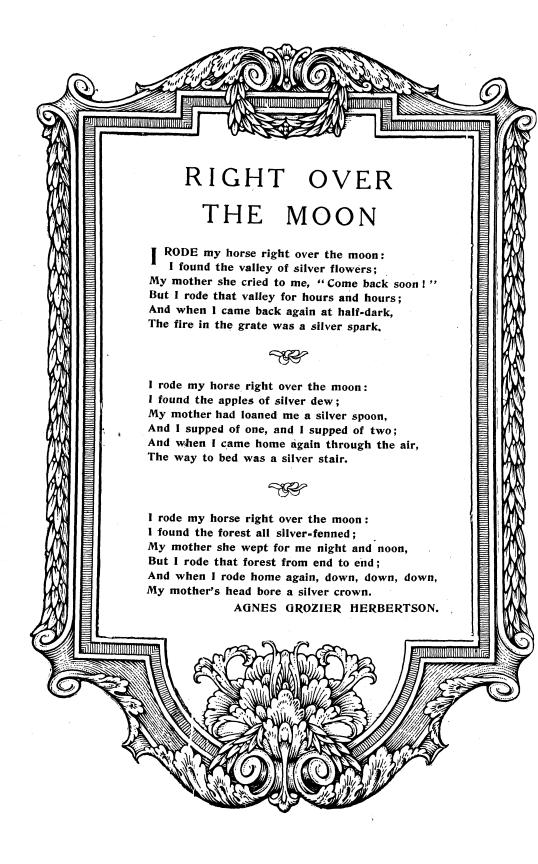
It is an ideal game to play after the day's work, and provides just the right amount of exercise and relaxation in the fresh air without undue physical strain. I am speaking of ordinary games, not the tournaments, as I do consider the latter a physical strain, especially for girls, in these days of

overcrowded entries.

Another important item is that lawn tennis is one of the cheapest forms of exercise and amusement. True, rackets and balls are increasingly costly, but the subscriptions to most clubs are comparatively small, and the charges at public parks and other playing-grounds are most reasonable.

At present the game, as everybody's game, is in its infancy. Later on, when genius has had a chance of developing, we shall probably welcome champions from our parks. The Public Schools, hitherte blind and deaf to the merits of the game, are gradually opening their eyes and ears, so that from that quarter also we may expect better results in the future.

But if an Englishman never wins another championship—if the British Isles never again hold the Davis Cup—England still has the right to be proud of her status in the game. She has been the pioneer. She first played the game and loved it, and she has taught other people all over the world to play the game and love it—surely a greater achievement and a finer record than any number of individual championships.



HAVING IT OUT

By H. F. FRAMPTON

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WALLIS MILLS

HE encounter took place near the swinging doors in the lounge of the hotel. The girl—she seemed hardly twenty years of age—was seated, reading, waiting for lunch-time. The young man seemed to have wandered in by chance, or because the hotel was nearer his place of business than any other similar institution. Probably for the last reason, because the large commissionaire by the door touched the peak of his cap in familiar and respectful greeting.

The girl looked up and caught the young man's expression of somewhat incredulous satisfaction. Her own mirrored the satisfaction, though not the surprise; but with no discernible evidence of recognition she allowed her gaze to travel aimlessly beyond the new arrival, and then resumed her

reading.

The young man stiffened with a sort of grim doggedness, and removed his hat. This he placed, together with his stick, by the foot of a chair which stood vacant beside the divan on which the girl was seated. then occupied the chair.

"Do you mind if I smoke, Phyl?" he

inquired.

She did not appear to have heard.

"Thank you," he added, and lit a cigarette.

She half rose, but changed her mind and

sat down again.

"Why should I mind what you do," she commented, "after what you have already done?"

"Thank you," he repeated. "Do you mind if I join you at lunch?"

"Really!" she expostulated.

"There's nothing startling, surely, in a simple request like that? It won't be the first time your mother and we two have lunched together. And we're to be engaged, aren't we ? ""

"Are we?"

The young man placed a hand on each knee and glared at the book she was nursing. The commissionaire, who, in the intervals of pulling open the glass doors, had so far found some difficulty in following the trend of the conversation, prepared to give

a little more attention to it.

"Whatever tittle-tattle you may have heard," the young man remarked deliberately, "which connects my name with that of Miss Rhodes, is utterly false. How you came to hear of the business at all, I can't understand—unless Jimmie himself is your informant; and he's an ass, as everybody knows—and allows for.'

"You appear to admit the 'business,' at

all events," the girl said, pleasantly calm.
"Such as it was—yes. If that's your reason for returning my letters unopened——"

"Yes?"

" Well, all I can say is," finished the young man, with insincere satisfaction, "that you are unnecessarily jealous of Miss Rhodes."

A little of the girl's pleasant calm seemed to evaporate, but she smiled quite sweetly.

"You have entirely mistaken my reason for returning your letter," she rejoined. "According to you, I am on a par with some petulant little flirt who is prepared to sulk on the flimsiest pretext. I am much obliged for the implied portrait."

"I don't imply anything of the sort. But I don't see why you should cut up rough simply because I go and spend a week-end with Jimmie Travers. I had a special reason for going, and Leila Rhodes is entirely unconnected with it. She happens to live in those parts, and looked in one afternoon to see Jimmie, that's all."

"That's all," repeated the girl ironically. "She looked in to see Jimmie, and you leave Jimmie at home, and go off to hear lectures together in the neighbouring town!"

"I took Miss Rhodes to a lecture," retorted the young man, with the earnestness of imperfect truth, "because I couldn't very well do otherwise. It was, in a manner of speaking, forced on me. I'll explain."

"Don't bother. I expect you have an

excellent reason.'

"There you are!" said the young man.

The commissionaire was in agreement with the last speaker.

Again the girl made to rise, but changed

her mind.

"You had better know why I returned your letter," she resumed. "Mamma wrote and asked you to spend the week-end with us. You replied that you were working hard and couldn't spare the time—or something to that effect. The same week-end you coolly go off and stay with your friend Travers. Am I to blame for inferring that you are rather tired of our company—mine and mother's?"

"Does your mother think that?" de-

manded the young man abruptly.

"I'm sure I don't know. What has that to do with the matter if I think so?"

"Exactly!" exclaimed the young man fiercely. "She doesn't leap to conclusions." Without allowing time for comment, he

"I refused your invitation continued: because I wasn't fit to accept it. When I said I was working hard, I meant it. Incidentally, I'd been unable had been. to get a wink of sleep for five nightsinsomnia."

Her swift glance of sudden concern and subsequent reassurance was wasted on him.

"I'm not fishing for sympathy," he went on, "but when even an ass like Jimmie Travers notices how seedy a fellow looks, you can take it from me that the fellow isn't fit for company. I went to Beauchamp at Jimmie's invitation. He lives there alone —when he does live there. He said he'd soon put me right. I didn't go because I believed him. I went because I was sick of the sight of my own bedroom ceiling, and because falling asleep while Jimmie's talking to one doesn't seem such a crime as dropping off in the middle of somebody else's remark -if you understand what I mean?"

"Quite. You felt you ran no such risk

in the company of Leila Rhodes?"

"I'm hanged if I say another word!" snarled the young man.

He rose, threw his cigarette away, and

sat down again.

They watched the people passing in to lunch, he with a wary eye on her slightest movement, she quite calmly. The commissionaire was hardly more calm.

"Perhaps it would be more convenient for you if you didn't," she said presently.

She looked at her wrist-watch and then up the broad flight of stairs leading to the corridors above. Covertly he followed her gaze, and proceeded hastily-

"Your continual references to Leila Rhodes are absolutely misplaced, Phyl. She hates the sight of me, and I don't wonder at it. It's an absolute farce to be quarrelling over her as we are."

"I've already told you why I sent back your letter. If you persist in thinking that I'm jealous of Leila Rhodes, you may. I suppose you know she's years older than you?"

"Very well, if Leila Rhodes isn't the

trouble, what is?"

"I've already explained."
"So have I. Are you going to throw doubt on my word? I assure you I wasn't fit to accept your invitation. On the other hand, I didn't want to make a song about it -about the insomnia. I knew the change of air would put me right. The morning after I got down there, Jimmie insisted on dragging me round for a long walk. We must have tramped about fifteen miles. He said it was part of his 'treatment.' When we got back we had a late lunch, and, if you want the disgusting details, a heavy one. That was part of Jimmie's treatment, too. Then we both went into the garden and sat in deck-chairs in the sun. You see the idea? He was trying to make me sleepy. And then Leila Rhodes turned up for Jimmie to take her to the confounded lecture, as he had promised."

"And she took you instead! Are you so deeply interested in her precious Cause of Humanity, with capital letters? Why couldn't Jimmie have explained, and allowed

you to go on sleeping? "

"Because I wasn't asleep," answered the young man almost pathetically. "I was sleepy, but hadn't been able to drop off. It was Jimmie who was asleep. He was as sound as a log."

A faint smile trembled briefly on the

girl's lips, and she averted her head.

"What was I to do?" pursued the young man. "Whatever people say about her, Leila's a decent girl, and I couldn't very well let her clear off alone. I was practically obliged to offer my escort."

"I fail to see where the obligation arises. Why couldn't you have woke Jimmie? He's supposed to be keen on her, isn't

"Because she was naturally offended, and wouldn't let me."

"No doubt! It wouldn't occur to her to put off going, I suppose?"

"She could hardly do that: she was one of the speakers at the thing."

"How you must have enjoyed it!"
"I did," said the young man grimly. "I've never enjoyed anything so much in my life. And the result is that Leila detests me like the very de-dickens, and you are going to throw me over like a worn-out glove. That's what it comes to."

He had the commissionaire's sympathy.

"Why should she hate you?"

"Because," replied the young man, with grave and tragic self-accusation, "I slept bang through the whole thing, and I should be sleeping there now if I hadn't fallen out of the seat when the people got up to go.

The girl's merry laughter rang through the lounge, and at that moment the mother

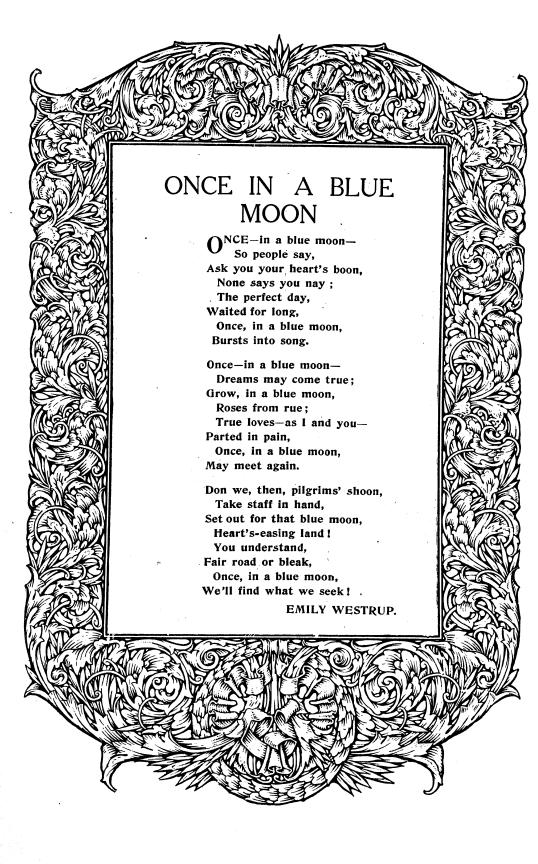
"Sulky boy!" she purred. "Come and lunch with me and mummie, and don't talk about Leila any more."

"They're all alike," mused the com-

missionaire.



"'Because,' replied the young man, 'I slept bang through the whole thing."



LOVE IN A MIST

By ASHLEY MILNER

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT BAILEY

"Le'S got a girl with 'im—a fresh 'un!"

Mr. William Henry Spriggs stiffened a little and ceased to lean against the gatepost which had been his visible means of support for the past twenty minutes. As he continued to eye the girl at his friend's side, so he continued to take an unconscious but definite interest in his own personal appearance. He shifted his cigarette from one side of his lips to the other, he pinched the waist of his necktie, and pulled the lapels of his coat forward. Always he was eyeing the small girl in white with an increasing interest.

He had never seen her before, yet somehow she electrified him. There was about her that something which distinguished her, in rather a startling and disturbing way, from every girl Mr. Spriggs had seen in his life before. He felt a queer commotion beneath his reversible front; he even gasped a little and gulped once. The girl passed him without a glance at him—an unforgettable vision of womanly delicacy and

charm.

"Wonder where he found 'er?" mused Mr. Spriggs rather breathlessly, nodding dumbly in response to his friend's murmured promise to him to be back in half a minute. Two minutes later, having duly escorted the lady into the lodging-house where both lived, the friend returned.

"Sorry to keep you waiting," he said.
"I brought my young lady back with me from business. She works near our place."

"So she's your young lady, is she?" said Mr. Spriggs, wondering why his voice sounded like that. He wondered also why he felt as if someone had suddenly struck him a violent blow in the pit of his stomach.

Both were drapery counter-men; but whereas Spriggs looked the part, his friend Mitchell had more the look of a clever young barrister. His face was clean-cut and handsome, with brilliant eyes and a high complexion which suited him. Mitchell's brilliant brown eyes smiled down at the

shorter man beside him as he noticed the almost awe-struck tone of his companion.

"You seem rather impressed with Elspeth," he drawled. "Certainly she's a wonderful girl. A superior type altogether, Spriggs. Related to titled people and all that kind of thing, but there was a family quarrel of some kind, and she's practically alone in the world, now her father's dead. We're getting married pretty soon, although she hasn't a penny in the world, and I'm not much better off. Still, for a girl like that, one has to risk things."

"For a girl like her," blurted Mr. Spriggs, and paused to draw a long, deep breath—"for a girl like her, a man might sell his very soul! She's wonderful, Mitchell."

Mitchell was amused again. It tickled him to imagine William Henry Spriggs in love with a girl like Elspeth Clifford—poor little Spriggs, with his sloping chin, his silly little moustache, and his general air of timid approval of his betters, a mere second salesman at the Manchester counter, a nobody. "You should look for another like her," he said, with a smug approval of his reflection in a window the same approval of his reflection

in a window they were passing.

"There isn't one," snapped Spriggs tensely. He recovered himself and tried to copy the detached manner of his companion.

"I could marry if I wanted to," he said humbly. "There's a girl in our shop that would marry me to-morrow if I could get a better job. Only I don't care for 'er. I fancy she'd have any chap on our floor, if she had the chance. Honest, Mitchell, I never had a girl take any kind of fancy to me yet without me feeling I was just something

she thought might do."

He fell into a long silence as Mitchell talked. He was still queerly silent after they parted, and he went back to the shop behind which he "lived in." Something had come into his life that evening—something he little understood and less expected—a crazy, hopeless love-at-first-sight for a girl who was a thousand miles above him, his chum's sweetheart.

They made strange companions, the fire of pure romance burning in the soul of the little man whose very being seemed undetachable from the atmosphere of Number Two at the Manchester counter. He fed the fire with secret longings, never asking himself whether honour bade him put Mitchell's fiancée out of his mind. The mere idea of Elspeth connected with himself by any other bond than hopeless worship from afar might have brought a smile even to his own lips.

One night, willing to add fuel to the fire by a new sight of that wistful, smiling, wonderful face, he called at the lodging-house where Mitchell "lived out." He called deliberately at a time when he knew Mitchell would not be indoors. He waited, glancing eagerly about him along the hall in the hope she might cross it and even look at him; but a long talk with a garrulous man with a grievance was his only reward.

Then something startling happened. A man came out of one of the rooms and looked sharply about him. "Mr. Mitchell here?" he asked, interrupting the tail end of the

grievance.

"No," said Spriggs mildly. "I'm waiting

for 'im myself.'

"Queer," said the man. "I just asked Miss Clifford whether she knew where he was, and she said she could hear him talking in the hall. She must have taken your voice for his—they're wonderfully alike."

"I thought so myself. Funny, isn't it?"

said the aggrieved man.

Spriggs went home without seeing Mitchell or Elspeth. But at least she had mistaken his voice for her sweetheart's. He must have a voice she liked, anyhow—a respectable kind of voice. He tried it once or twice, and was proud of it. He had never noticed before what an excellent voice it was.

He looked at the calendar and gulped back something from his throat, and to his pinched face came a whiteness and a

tension.

They were to be married soon. It made no difference to him, of course; the wedding day would go by over his head, and perhaps he would feel better when it was come and gone. He might settle down again after.

Only somehow he hated the very ticking of the clock that brought the day nearer. He would feel bad that day. He knew it

beforehand.

The two men drifted apart, more by instinct than by design. Spriggs loved

Elspeth with the blind worship of a simple soul; with the same simplicity he envied Mitchell until the envy became dislike. Mitchell was rather glad to find himself dropped by William Henry Spriggs, having been surprised at his own condescension in allowing a funny little freak like Spriggs to hang around after him. A man who's likely to get on in the world must draw the line somewhere.

Then Spriggs met his elegant one-time friend by chance. He turned a shade whiter, screwed up his lips, and blurted

his brave question:

"Married yet, Mitchell?"
"Great Scot, no!" cried Mitchell, stopping. "Haven't you heard? She's blind!"

"Bli . . ."

"Stone blind, yes. Terrible, isn't it? An accident at the place where she worked—some sort of small explosion, I gather, that swished a lot of metal filings, not much bigger than dust, into her face. Only her eyes suffered, so they say, but they're gone. . . I say, you're as pale as death, old man! Steady! What's come over you?"

Mr. Spriggs gasped and panted and clutched feebly at the iron railing beside him. "What's going to happen now?" he bleated faintly. "It's put off your wedding?"

Mitchell thrust out his lips and assumed the common-sense, man-of-the-world manner. "Put it off, of course," he said briefly. "In fact, it's off altogether. Because, you see, Spriggs, how can a man like me marry a blind girl? Another man could, perhaps, but when a chap's just going to start on his own in the provinces, what good would a blind wife be to him? It would mean having to pay someone to take over the millinery, and that would sink the concern. Besides, there's another girl I used to be friendly with. Really, you know, we were in love all the time, but we had a tiff just before I met Elspeth. And this other girl -Maud, her name is—she's the cleverest hand at the millinery."

"Mitchell," said little Spriggs, staring up into the other's face with his eyes wide open and his harmless little fists clenched, "Mitchell, you're a dirty cad! Now, then!"

He shut his eyes and waited to be knocked down. Finding the blow did not fall, he opened them again and saw that the epithet had fallen off Mitchell like water off a duck's back. Indeed, Mitchell was looking beyond Spriggs at two girls slowly approaching them. "She's out of hospital," he said.

"She's here with a friend leading her. Guh! Pitiful, isn't it? I expect she's looking for me, wondering why I've not been round to see her, or something. You see, I-I changed my lodgings. Don't go, Spriggs.

She'll not see you."

Spriggs gathered from Mitchell's tone that Mitchell had taken the opportunity of Elspeth's absence and blindness to get out of her way. It was an easier way of breaking off the engagement than telling the girl to her face. Telling her to her face that he no longer intended to marry her, now that she was blind, was a terrible ordeal for a merciful man. And Mitchell was an exceptionally merciful man—to Mr. Mitchell.

However, he stood his ground now whilst Elspeth approached. Better to have it out She would always be and done with. looking for him unless he made her under-He nodded to the girl friend at Elspeth's side and greeted the blind girl by name. A smile lifted the sadly drooping corners of Elspeth's lips; she murmured something to her friend, and the girl hurried

Spriggs stood watching, with his heart beating like a kettle-drum. It seemed to him an infinitely pathetic thing to see how Elspeth's face lifted itself to where she supposed Mitchell to be, as if her blind eyes could see. It was pathetic that she should have sent her girl friend away, believing that she needed no other guide than her lover, and that she was now alone with him. But Spriggs stood by, dogged as some little terrier which has set itself on guard. He knew beforehand how a double darkness was to fall upon the girl, whose fingers had reached out to touch Mitchell's arm so that she might know just where he stood.

Unashamedly Spriggs listened for every word between the pair. He grated his teeth as Mitchell's suave and elegant language explained to Elspeth that he wanted always to be her friend; how he would be glad any time to help her if he could; how her disaster had, of course, made everything different. The girl listened dumbly. Only Spriggs himself saw the momentary tightening of the broad yet lovely lips.

He expected an outburst from the girl. He waited for sharp questions as to what Mitchell really meant. Then, taught by the girl herself, he suddenly remembered what he had heard of her—that she was gently born and bred, what people call a lady.

Therefore she understood Mitchell in When the clacking of his apolosilence. getic tongue ceased a moment, she held out her hand in parting and thanked him in rather a hoarse little voice for his good Then she turned away, faltering in her direction a moment, but retreating to the inner side of the pavement when a passing motor-'bus warned her of where the roadway lay. Mitchell watched her go, perhaps forgetting himself in his relief to be through with a thoroughly disagreeable business. He had forgotten Spriggs also, for he swung round presently and ran for a 'bus which had stopped a dozen yards away.

"Dirty cad I called 'im!" breathed Mr. Spriggs, taking so long a breath that his inflated chest seemed to tip his shoulders

back. "Ugh!"

He looked after Elspeth and saw her hesitating at the street corner. The sight galvanised him into action; he ran like a hare until he was by her side, looking timidly at her.

"Let me see you 'ome," he panted.

"Please let me go with you that far"

The girl turned her head sharply. "There's no need, Mr. Mitchell," she said coldly. "Once I'm across here I-I can find my wav."

Spriggs gasped and retreated a step,

staring and open-mouthed.

His voice! Once again she had mistaken his voice for Mitchell's. Besides, who, except Mitchell, would know where she He remained stock still for a moment, drinking in the tremendous, heartstopping fact that she utterly and completely believed him to be Mitchell. Then very slowly it seemed as though his laggard wits began to prick and stir and move again.

Let me see you 'ome-Elspeth," he begged, speaking her name with a kind of awed reverence. "Just along 'ere, see. Mrs. Brewer will be anxious if your friend goes back without you, knowing you're alone and blind. . . No, no! 'Arf a

minute!"

He snatched at her arm when, to be rid of him, she seemed likely to take a desperate passage across the busy crossing that would have taken her into a tangle of traffic. "Please let me see you 'ome. It's not safe, else."

He kept his hold of her arm, thrilled by his own daring. And suddenly, out of his pity for her, out of his blind worship of her, came an idea that flashed into his cloudy wits with a brilliance that dazzled him.

He did not stop to think. He was not the kind of man who stops to think. The possession of one clear idea was too rare a possession to be argued with or lost. A moment's reflection might have warned him that he was running a frightful risk of humiliating her far more than Mitchell's suavity had done. An hour's reflection might have convinced him that his idea was sheer impossible madness. But the idea was bigger than William Henry Spriggs; it mastered him, swept him from his feet, dominated the rest of him.

She was blind, and she thought him to be Mitchell. She was blind, and could not see his little figure, his plain face, his general insignificance. She was blind and poor and helpless and alone in the world, with even her lover gone. And he, little William Spriggs, loved her with a passion that was

an agony to him.

"We're across now, Elspeth," he said humbly. "And I want to walk home with you just to explain that I—I think you misunderstood me just now—when we were talking at the corner, I mean. Did you think that you being blind was going to make any difference to my—my love for you?"

"You gave me little chance to suppose anything else," she returned, in grave, sad aloofness. He noticed she seemed puzzled and doubtful, turning as if to look at him. It is so pitifully difficult to understand when

you cannot see.

"Elspeth," said Spriggs hoarsely, bending toward her, "if ever I spoke a word that seemed to mean I didn't love you with all my 'eart and soul, then I beg your forgiveness on my bended knees. There wasn't ever a moment when I loved you better than I do now. You being blind only makes me simply desp'rate to help you, to work for you. . . I'd work my fingers to the bone, as women say, if only you'll let me. I'll describe things to you so lifelike that you'll fancy you see them again. . . . Elspeth, if only you'll marry a chap like me. . . .!"

The puzzled frown upon her face grew into utter bewilderment. She paused, seemingly nonplussed. "I can't understand," she said at last wearily, passing her hand before her eyes. "I've promised to marry you, Rob. I never doubted I should marry you until, only a moment ago, you talked as if——"

"As if I'd lost my senses!" cried Mr. Spriggs, covering her retreat more by

instinct than by design. "I'd have been cruel to say anything like that and mean it, Elspeth. I—I scarcely know what I'm saying, even now; it sort of takes my breath away to know I'm with you—again!"

He was going more warily now, having suddenly reminded himself that he must be careful to pronounce every "h." Mitchell never dropped an "h." Moreover, the stupendous future began to loom more nearly before him, promising unspeakable

things.

His caution to ape Mitchell more closely kept his passion in a kind of strangling grip. He assumed their betrothal and talked of their wedding. He borrowed the lordly confidence of a Mitchell, while secretly cringing before her beauty and her wonder. When they stopped at the gateway of her lodging, he was eager to be away before some other boarder should see him and possibly warn the girl that he was not Mitchell. Yet he delivered his breathless coda.

"If ever you're tight up for money, Elspeth, don't you forget that you've a right to every penny of mine. As for work, I'll get you work that a blind girl can do, until we're married. I'll give my notice in if the guv'nor won't find work of some kind for you. It's terrible to be blind, and I'm not saying it isn't; but if a man's love can make even blindness any easier to bear—oh, if only a chap like me could ever be worth a girl like you!"

He had almost forgotten again, as the soul of William Henry Spriggs came breasting through the cloak of Mitchell. Yet he saw her lips smile as if for the first time he

had made her happy.

She gave him her hand and he took it, looking down at her. For an electric instant he fancied she would have offered her lips to his kiss. But he was mistaken; she drew her hand from his swiftly and turned gropingly into the house.

It was a brief, weird, mad kind of courtship, when the tiniest slip might mean a disaster that Spriggs never dared to contemplate, much less to fathom. It was a courtship that, in a vague sort of way, made Mr. Spriggs believe that he understood how Blondin must have felt when he picked his footing along a tight-rope with the Niagara Falls roaring beneath him.

"It's all impossible," mused Spriggs to himself, sitting on the edge of his bed before his four room-companions were

" Even upstairs. though she's never found out yet, she's sure to find out sooner or later. I could get a job in the provinces, o' course, where folk wouldn't know us; but even there someone's sure to say to her some day: 'What a nice little man your husband is!' or something of that kind. And

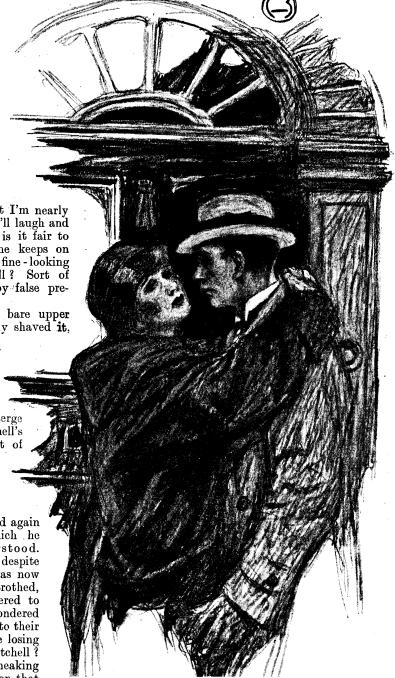
when she says that I'm nearly six foot, then they'll laugh and tell her. Besides, is it fair to marry 'er when she keeps on thinking I'm a fine-looking chap like Mitchell? Sort of obtaining a wife by false pretences!"

He stroked his bare upper lip: he had privily shaved it, because Mitchell was clean-shaven. He rubbed his hand along the rough serge coat he wore in imitation of the rough serge which was Mitchell's

favourite wear out of the shop, and he pondered, chin on fist, staring at the hole in the carpet below.

He called to mind again certain things which he had never understood. He wondered why, despite the fact that he was now Mitchell and her betrothed. Elspeth never offered to kiss him. He wondered she never referred to their wedding. Was she losing her love for Mitchell? Had Mitchell's sneaking speech of farewell on that eventful night struck a death-blow to her love?

And if she ended by losing her love for Mitchell, how could she ever marry Mr. Spriggs?



"In the shadows beside the door of the lodging-house she drew his face to hers and kissed him."

Yet she accepted all the tender thought with which Spriggs guarded her in his *rôle* of Rob Mitchell. She had accepted the

work which he had found for her. She was eager for his company, gentle in her replies, but always, as it seemed to Spriggs, she was more and more distant.

Then queerly she changed—an abrupt and startling change which filled and crammed him with a feeling of guilt as desperate as it was delicious. As they parted one evening, in the shadows beside the door of the lodging-house, she drew his face to hers and kissed him—a tender, passionate kiss which seemed to draw his very soul through his lips. "I love you!" she whispered, trembling as his arms caught her to him.

Mr. Spriggs went from her a little unsteadily when the marvellous parting was over. Her kiss was still burning upon his lips; it made him feel somewhat as a street urchin might feel who wears a priceless

diamond among his rags.

Things happened rather swiftly after that. Elspeth was wonderfully his own, ready to marry him when he willed. And Mitchell, seeing the blind girl with Spriggs one night, showed only a detached amusement when he heard from Spriggs how his name was being used. Spriggs, ending his story with a fervid hope that Mitchell would neither tell Elspeth the facts nor raise any objection to the use of his name, was met with a laugh.

. "I dare say there are a hundred or two Rob Mitchells in the world besides me," he said. "You can be one of 'em, if you like. Only, mark you, I know nothing about this, Spriggs. It's no affair of mine if you get found out. Cruel sort of game, I call it."

"Cruel!" blazed Spriggs. "Which would be more cruel—to let her think that Mitchell had jilted her and left her to starve, perhaps, just because she went blind, or let her think that Mitchell wants to marry her while she's blind, just to take the care of 'er that she needs?"

Mitchell flushed. "No business of mine," he said. "But a marriage won't be legal

if you take a false name."

"Yes, it will; I looked it up," said Spriggs sourly. "If both parties conspire together to go under false names, then it's illegal; but the wrong name of one party without the other's knowledge—that's legal."

"And you'll actually marry her, with

her thinking you're me ? "

"She's known me long enough now to see what sort of man I am," returned Spriggs, hanging his head. "The only fraud is that she thinks I'm you to look at.

But what matter is that to 'er, if she's blind? I'd tell her the whole truth, only I'm afraid of losing her. And—and I'm afraid of what she'd suffer if she knew you really did jilt 'er and then I took your engagement over. She'd think I was only doing it out of pity for her."

They left it at that. Mitchell was too absorbed in his prospects of opening a shop of his own to care about what happened to Elspeth and Spriggs. But he walked round to see Spriggs one night with a letter

in his hand.

"It's meant for you, of course," he said.

"It's from Elspeth."

Spriggs took the letter, crazy with jealousy that Mitchell should have seen it. It explained that Elspeth had been to the hospital where she had regularly attended as an out-patient since her discharge. The surgeon had detained her; she would be there a month or more, perhaps.

A couple more letters followed, with little information in them. Mitchell brought them both over; then he brought a third, which he handed to Spriggs with the laconic

remark: "This alters things."

"Dear Rob," wrote the girl, "I've big news for you this time—big, big news. I never told you my sight was gone permanently, although you seemed to take it for granted that it was. Now I'm to go under a simple operation that may cure me and probably will. My eyes are filled with this metal dust, and they've a magnet that will draw all the metal out. It's only been a case of finding out whether they could draw the metal out without hurting my eyes or my poor little brains. They don't tell me much, but I gather from the nurse that I'm almost certain to be cured. Can you imagine what that means to me?

"There's another big piece of news, too. They've been questioning me whether I hadn't anyone belonging to me who could pay for what I'm costing. So I had to tell them about my mother's brother, although I didn't want to, because he quarrelled with my mother and cut us off from him. He's wickedly rich. Now he's replied telling them he'll stand any expense they can possibly go to for the sake of my poor blinded eyes; and it's so touched him to know I'm almost destitute and blind, that he's written promising me three hundred pounds a year for the rest of my life. Isn't it good how pain brings pity, brings help? The sweet and trouble

uses of adversity, that heal a wound like my uncle's anger against mother and me!

"So now, dearest, with all that money to count on, and my eyes coming back to me, I want only you. . . .

Spriggs stopped. He could read no more. Mitchell was sitting smoking, watching the rings that he was artistically blowing.

'Alters things, doesn't it ?" he inquired. "I finished with Maudie long ago: Elspeth was too much of a lady to let me be satisfied with anything less. And now that Elspeth can see, of course it means a bunk-ee-doodlei-do for you, doesn't it? You can't face her, y'know, can you?"

Spriggs sat breathless, rigid. His weak face looked weaker still in this instant of an agony that he was too bewildered even to understand. Save for the twitching of his bloodless lips, one might have believed the

man to be suddenly lifeless.

"I'm glad she can see, anyways," he whispered quiveringly at last. "No one can say I'm not glad, for 'er sake. . . ."

Mr. Mitchell struck him a cheery, buoyant sort of smack on the shoulders, as one good fellow to another. "Cheer up, you'll get over it," he said. "It's lucky for you, of course, that I'm here and willing to see you well out of it. She need never know what you've been up to; I'll let her think it was me all the time. For if she saw you and knew you were the chap she's been kissing, she'd feel like giving you up to the police for fraud, much less marrying you. But I'll stand by you, old chap. I'll marry her myself."

He was graciousness itself. He felt conscious of it, and overweeningly proud of himself, as he strolled elegantly away, leaving the stricken little man behind him.

Spriggs changed his job. He scarcely knew why, except that he was restless and nervy enough to change anything that was possibly changeable. Certainly he would never have admitted he was running away from Elspeth.

He had to step down the ladder of fortune in moving his berth. He was only Number Three in the Manchester Department now, and the grub was poorer. But he hoped, maybe, the change would help him to forget.

Elspeth was out of the hospital now. Indeed, she had been discharged as cured for three months, and had since been living as a convalescent with her repentant uncle. Spriggs knew so much from Mitchell, with whom he kept in insistent touch. He knew also that Elspeth would be returning to London shortly, although Mitchell was no longer allowing Spriggs to see the letters which she wrote.

"I know what I'll do when she does come back," declared Spriggs to himself, as he stood gazing blankly before him in the drowsy middle of an autumn day. "I'll let 'er know that Mitchell gave 'er up. She'll treat me like a worm, I expect, for my share in it, but I'll have to speak up. I'd be a dirty cad myself, like I once called Mitchell to his face, if I stood by and let 'er marry him after he jilted 'er, and then took her back because she got three hundred a year of her own. She's the right to know \dots ."

He stopped. Someone immediately before him was speaking to him in a voice that made his heart stop beating for a second and then pulse frantically.

His eyes came down to the voice. He stood rooted there, openmouthed, dazed. Elspeth was a yard from him, repeating her question.

"Th-through there, madam," spluttered the witless man. "F-forward, port-

manteaux!"

No portmanteaux came forward, however, although a sleek gentleman presently appeared, smiling and bowing. them after," said Elspeth hastily, looking queerly up at Spriggs. "Show me—er show me what you sell here."

Mr. Spriggs obeyed in a fashion as vague as the request had been, but he noticed that every time he opened his lips she was listening intently, voraciously.

"I'll not buy anything," said the weird customer. "But you've been wonde obliging. Won't you shake hands?" "But you've been wonderfully

Luckily Mr. Spriggs's counter was hidden a little behind fixtures, and the shop was empty. Thus no one was there to see the unusual request responded to. Elspeth held his hand for a long moment, looking up at his plain face. Then suddenly she glanced round, drew him to her by his hand, and kissed him. "You dear!" she whispered. "You splendid, stupid, faithful dear! know everything, 'Rob Mitchell.' Tell your manager you're coming out to tea with me. If he won't let you come, say-say you're coming."

Spriggs gave up thinking, since thinking only made it worse. He said nothing, nor did he go below for his hat. He merely followed her out of the shop and into a quiet recess within the smart tea-rooms

opposite.
"I know everything," repeated Elspeth, with a flashing smile that electrified him, "and I've known almost everything almost from the first. That night when Mr. Mitchell jilted me because I was blind, I'll admit I mistook you for him. It seemed to me even then that Mr. Mitchell had grown shorter all at once, for your voice came so much nearer to my ears. But I wasn't used to being blind then; I just thought I was wrong. But the moment you shook hands with me, when you left me that night, I could tell, of course. How could you suppose I wouldn't know the difference between his hand and yours? I was furious at first. Then, after you'd gone and I thought over every word you said, I realised what a—a hero you were. I realised what kind of love yours must be. . . I didn't know who you were, but I intended to know such a I was out of love with that cad Mitchell, and I just waited until I loved you. How could I help loving, when you'd done all that for me? Don't you remember how one night I kissed you and told you I loved you?

Spriggs's shining eyes answered for him. "But you wrote to Mitchell from the

'ospital!" he managed to say.

"How could I do anything else? I didn't even know your name, and for your sake I wasn't going to let other people know what I knew. So I had to write to Mitchell, hoping the letters would reach you through him. But now, after I've come back, I've been making inquiries. I've had a talk with my landlady, who had previously tried to explain to me that the man who used to bring me home at nights wasn't Rob Mitchell any more. That's how I came to this shop looking for you. That's why I had to make every assistant in the place speak to me, so that I could be guided by their voices. That's why I made you shake hands with me; I knew by your voice and

by your hand that you were. . ."

"Me!" blurted Spriggs helpfully.

"Yes." She looked him full in the face. "And I was glad," she said honestly. "You're just the kind of man I expectedand hoped for. Now let's write straight off to Rob Mitchell and tell him our good news. Everything else can wait until I've done that, for I'm just longing to do it. Won't



he be pleased!"

LILY LORE.

JOW the white lilies bend In the still evening hour; Like the face of a friend, Comes the breath of a flower.

Then the little winds wake, Stir the lilies, they sway, Day's silence forsake-Ah, what secrets to say?

EDITH DART.

THE CROWN OF BAYS

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

THE brothers Bree had not met for many years prior to that little dinner at the Trocadero, when each, with the splendid traditional courage of the Brees, had striven gallantly to fight against and hide his natural antipathy for the other.

Stanislaus, the elder, had invested his patrimony in gilt-edged stock and retired into Cornwall to write poetry. A man so named is foredoomed from birth either to write poetry or lead a deplorable life. William, the younger, a large, bullet-headed, football-playing person, usually spoken of as "dear old Billy," had taken his sturdy Philistinism into the City, where it had caused him to flourish exceedingly. two brothers had been in the habit of exchanging letters about thrice yearly.

The poet had lived hermit-like for years. Six volumes of his verse had been written, printed, and published without extracting anything more fulsome from the critics than two or three lines to announce that they had read it all without fatigue. Then Fame had crept upon the recluse. "Crept" seems hardly the right word, as seeming to suggest that it had sneaked up behind him and bitten him in the leg, but it will have to serve. "Hylas and the Naiads" was no better and no worse than any of the previous half-dozen volumes, but its appearance attracted a little more attention. People bought remainders and second-hand copies of the neglected books. Other editions were printed. For the first time in his life Stanislaus received a cheque from his publisher. His photograph appeared in Our Books." Long-haired men and shorthaired women discussed him seriously in mixed clubs where it was considered Bohemian to sit on the floor.

"As far as I can make out," William told him, "the secret of your success is your rigid propriety. You dance through the classics, like Tennyson, on very skilful feet. The way you ignore the polygamic tendencies of some of the Immortals is a sheer joy. That sort of thing pays in the end. Every girls' school in the country is full of your books."

Stanislaus shook out his long hair and

looked slightly annoved.

"I do not work with an eye to commercial success," he said. "As to my books being read in ladies' schools, you will find Shake-speare, Shelley, and Keats on the same shelves."

William coughed and frowned at the entrée presented for his inspection by the

"Yes, that's all right," he said, addressing the servitor. To his brother he made no remark. There is a strong warning against calling one's brother a fool.

"Touching the fact that we both need a holiday," said Stanislaus, reverting to a previous topic, "I have nearly made up my mind to go to the Riviera at the end of the

month.'

"The Riviera!" William gasped. "In

the middle of the summer?"

"Why not? I am not a man of fashion. I am going to write modern poetry. I want to mix with a cosmopolitan crowd not necessarily of the best type. One must study one's fellow-men. I have nearly made up my mind."
"You'll find it warm," was all William

could think of saying.

"I am used to heat. In my little Cornish home I have gathered wild strawberries on Christmas Day and heard the cuckoo in October."

William grinned.

"Stanislaus," he said, "you must certainly have a holiday. The cuckoo in October, eh? I am not a total abstainer,

but—well, seen any of those nasty vermilion rats lately?"

The other gazed upon him stonily.

"If you will stop being amusing for a moment," he said, "I will tell you what I

was thinking."

"My dear boy, forgive me. I don't want to vex your mind with my shallow wit. But I think I know. You were going to offer to let me the cottage for a week or two."

"For a month at-well, as you're my

brother, three guineas a week.'

"Fifty per cent. on, owing to the ties of consanguinity. It lies in a wooded hollow by the sea, you told me, about two miles from Tregarnock. What sort of place is Tregarnock?"

"Quite charming. A certain number of summer visitors find their way there, however."

"Well, that won't hurt me. I'm not a

hermit, anyhow. Any fishing?"

"I, personally, object to taking life. have heard the so-called sport well spoken

"For a man who's just eaten prawns, anchovies, sardines, and a lobster mayonnaise, your scruples do you credit. Well, I'll think about that cottage of yours."

Π.

WILLIAM approached the tree on which the pinned sheet of notepaper was fluttering in the sea-breeze. He approached it in a manner to suggest that he thought the wide green trunk concealed a lurking bravo who was even then giving a preliminary swing to his sandbag. Every nerve in his body tingled with irritation. He knew exactly what sort of message he would find inscribed upon that fluttering sheet. It was not the first which had flaunted itself there before his

He took it down. On it was inscribed, in round school-girlish handwriting, the following outpourings of a love-smitten soul:

> Oh, how I love you, Mr. Bree, And how I love your poetree! I would that you loved little Me!—Dorrs.

Overcome by something like biliousness, William tore the offending sheet of paper across and across again until its fragments were many.

"Little beast!" he muttered with venom. " Nasty — sloppy — sentimental — beastly

little beast!"

All the world knew where Bree the poet lived. His "delightful cottage in Lyonesse," as journalists inaccurately described it, had been referred to in a dozen newspaper articles. "Who's Who" supplied his exact Tregarnock village, two miles address. distant, was filling up with quiet families on holiday. The quiet families seemed to consist mostly of school-girls, all of whom were ardent worshippers of the milk-and-sugar verses of Stanislaus.

William could not get away from the fact that his name was Bree; that he was William, and not Stanislaus, was, however, something which he could not induce the pilgrims, who arrived daily, to believe. They were mostly small girls between thirteen and seventeen years old, who ostentatiously carried a copy of one of his brother's works. The lonely cottage was lonely no longer. There were generally three or four of them gaping outside, nudging each other and indulging in reverent giggles whenever he dared show himself. One little horror, presumably named Doris, had gone further than the others and borrowed a leaf out of Orlando's book. "As You Like It" is performed annually by every girls' school in the country, unless they happen to be presenting "A Midsummer Night's Dream" by way of a change.

But little girls, although they provided the greater part of the nuisance, had not the monopoly of annoying William. Only yesterday he had caught a grown manand a well-dressed one at that—in the act of escaping from his garden with a stem of rhubarb, evidently gathered for a souvenir. The broken flower-pot which William sent after him missed his left ear by little more

than an inch.

No wonder, he reflected bitterly, that Stanislaus had decided to leave his hermitage during the holiday season. Even the Riviera must be better than this. He envied his brother, gasping in the dust-storms. Stanislaus had a sweet tooth for popular adulation, but too much of this sort of thing must have

exposed the nerve.

The cottage lay in a deep hollow in the cliffs like nothing so much as the half of a broken cup. On three sides of it trees and shrubs climbed a precipitous slope. On the fourth, scarcely a hundred yards distant. the Atlantic beat upon a beach of dark sands. A miniature stream poured out of the hillside, falling from ledge to ledge in a series of little cascades, and ran out into the cove through a narrow channel. It was as pleasing a spot as one could find in all the Duchy, but William had almost ceased to take joy of it.

It was late in the afternoon, and William was returning from a long tramp along the coast, when he discovered Doris's effusion. Still muttering unpoetical remarks below his breath, he flung open the door of the boudoir-like apartment in which his brother was given to entertain the Muses. A lady rose to receive him, almost with an air of hospitality.

She was a tall, wiry, athletic woman of uncertain age and athletic build. Her irongrey hair was cut short, she wore greenish tweeds, and her long, thin face was as sunburnt as a sailor's. She greeted William with a smile of assurance, and immediately

began to speak.

"I hope you don't mind my having come in," she said. "I couldn't make anybody hear. I came over quite faint while I was passing, and felt that I must come in and rest."

She looked fit and strong enough to wrestle with a policeman, but William had not quite the heart to ask her why she had not rested outside.

"Er—not at all," he muttered.

"You're Mr. Bree, aren't you?" She fumbled with something in what looked like a music-case. To his horror, William saw a gleam of manuscript. "I write poetry, too, you know."

"I hope you are quite rested, madam,"

William said.

"Oh, yes, thank you. Er—I wondered whether I might trouble you for your opinion on . . . publishers are so stupid and self-opinionated, you know. I dare say you have discovered that. My friends, who wouldn't flatter me for worlds, all tell me——"

William drew a long breath.

"Madam," he said, "I have never written a line of verse in my life, and never shall. I know nothing about it. I think you are confusing me with my brother, who lent me the cottage."

The lady was unabashed.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "his brother! How interesting! I have admired his work so tremendously. Do sit down and tell me about him while I—while I continue resting."

William spoke, but with difficulty.

"I hope your attack of faintness is over, madam," he said. "You see, I am just going to have a bath. I always take a bath in here. So much more comfortable than the kitchen. I spread a mat and then drag the bath in. I regret that the narrow-minded conventions of a censorious

world forbid my inviting you to remain, but-----"

When she was gone, he rubbed his hands together in a kind of gleeful triumph. That elation which causes cockerels to leap upon high perches and crow defiance to the world possessed him. But it was short-lived. Five minutes later two timid taps sounded on the outer door. William strode thither and Two young girls, both aged opened it. about sixteen, wearing coloured school ribbons around their wide-brimmed straw hats, stood on the threshold. They were pretty children. Their faces were rosy-red, their hair flaxen. William noticed, while his heart sank, that each carried a red leather book with the ominous word "Autographs" inscribed on it in gold letters.

"What can I do for you?" he asked,

although he already knew.

He had meant to be rude and found it beyond his power. His nurse had told him, as a baby, that little girls were made of sugar, spice, and other delicacies. The old illusion still smiled at him over the shoulder of maturer knowledge. If they were nuisances, they were at least charming nusiances.

"We wondered," the foremost blurted out stumblingly, "whether we dared ask

you to sign our autograph books?"

He took them, smiling despite himself. Selecting in each a page of a light bilious green, he wrote "William Bree" in large bold characters with the slim bone-headed

pencil timidly proffered him.

"Here you are," he said. "And now, my dear young ladies, you will notice that my name is William Bree and not Stanislaus. I think it was my brother's autograph you wanted. You will do me a great service by telling all your friends that he doesn't live here now."

He watched them down the path and then closed the door. He would have liked to invite them to tea in the garden, but refrained for fear of creating too dangerous a precedent. He was heartily glad a minute or two later.

The window of the front room was open, and he could hear quite plainly the voices of his two late visitors, who had halted beyond the garden boundary to examine his signature.

"But why," asked one voice, "does he

say he isn't Stanislaus if he is?"

"Because he's shy, you silly insect," retorted the other voice, "and he doesn't want a lot of people worrying him."

"He looks like a poet," the first voice admitted cheerfully.

"And so he is. Didn't you think he was

sweet?"

"Oh, perfectly ducky!"

"After all, we have got his autograph, even if he did sign himself William instead of Stanislaus."

"Yes. And won't Maisie and Sybil and Gladys and Mary and Rosalind be fed up about our getting there first? I expect they'll all be over to-morrow."

William groaned aloud.

"That," he exclaimed to himself, "has finished it! I must clear off at the end of the week." III.

WILLIAM did not steal up behind the girl with the velvet tread of a panther intent upon its luncheon. Afterwards he was quite firm in denying that he had crept, sneaked, sidled, or tip-toed. On the other hand, he was ready to admit, under pressure, that he did not go out of his way to make her aware of his presence. The grass was thick and soft, the miniature falls were doing their best to roar, and long rollers were battering the beach. There was plenty of noise to drown a not too clumsy approach.

He had caught her at last, red-handed, as it were, in the act. There she was, by the tree, a sheet of notepaper—doubtless marred by some doggerel lines addressed to his brother—in her hand. Why didn't she hang

it up? he wondered.

He was really angry, or thought he was. He had supposed some child to be guilty of this folly. To find her a woman grown irritated him the more. The tall, slim figure, of which he could see only the back, promised to belong to a girl at the end of her teens or in the early twenties. Generally he had found himself lacking in courage where women were concerned. Now irritation and disgust lent him what he lacked. He would end this nuisance, frighten her, shame her.

He was almost within arm's length of her when she heard him and wheeled around. He found himself looking into a pair of startled brown eyes which seemed to be opening wider and wider as they gazed upon him. Her hair was soft and tawny, and swept her brows like a coloured shadow. Not much more than a child, he thought, but nineteen or twenty, and old enough to know better. Pretty, too, he thought, the more the pity, and found himself subconsciously noting the rising warmth of colour in two rounded cheeks.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "I didn't hear you! You startled me!"

He bowed. She crushed in her hand the sheet of paper.

"I think," he said deliberately, "that is

for me. May I see it, please?"

"Oh, no, no, no!" His conscience pricked him at the sound of the anguish of embarrassment in her voice. "Are vouare you Mr. Bree?"

"That is my name until I can get it altered by deed of poll," he answered. wanted me to see that sheet of paper. Why

not show it to me?"

Her brown eyes flamed at him.

"I did not want you to see it!" she cried. "I had taken it down. I was just going to destroy it."

"Thank you," he answered coldly. "That is an unpleasant task which has hitherto

devolved upon me."

was frightened, ashamed; chemical action of the two emotions sent her white with anger. She flung the crumpled sheet of paper at his feet.

"Here, take it, then—if it is any sop to

your vanity, Mr. Bree!" she cried.

He would have spared her but for her anger. What right had she to be angry? Gravely he stooped and picked it up, smoothed it out, and as gravely read aloud three doggerel lines written across it, signed as before by "Doris."

> "Why won't you answer, Mr. Bree, My letters writ in poetree? I want to ask you round to tea."

He thought he saw light.
"I see," he remarked; "this is a joke. I don't mind a bit being made ridiculous, but-

"I have told you already that I was removing it," she said coldly. Something seemed to dawn upon her, and she took half a step forward. "Do you-did you think that I wrote that ? "

"I certainly drew my own conclusions," he said coldly. "The—er—the lyrics which have been appearing on this tree did not

grow there.

"While I was taking it down I scratched myself with the pin. Look!" She began to unwind a miniature handkerchief from one of her fingers. That at least explained why she had been loitering so long by the tree. Then, as if angry with herself at having begun to offer any proof, she snatched her hand away and hid it behind her. "What sort of a person do you take me for? Why should I trouble to pin messages to you on trees? I never saw you before, and I detest, your—your so-called poetry."

Quite suddenly William found himself

some while who shared his own views about his brother's work.

"It is awful bilge, isn't it?" he said, so



"'I have told you already that I was removing it,' she said coldly."

liking her. He approved a little temper. Also she was the first person he had met for sincerely that she stared at him in amazement. "May I ask," he added, "merely out

of curiosity, to whom I am indebted for these

affectionate greetings?"

"At least they're sincere," she retorted.
"You owe them "—she bit her lip—" you owe them to a poor child who meant no harm—a little girl who may not live very long."

She had struck him beneath his guard.

Metaphorically he raised his hands.

"I'm sorry," he stammered. "I didn't know. How was I to know?"

She lowered her gaze and began digging into the soft earth with the toe of one of her little shoes.

"No, you didn't know. I didn't know until to-day. The child who sent you those messages can't move. She got another little girl to hang them there, so that you might see. I have stopped it now, and I came myself to remove this one. It shall not happen again."

There came to William a very definite feeling that the tables had been turned

upon him.

"I don't think I'm a pig really," he said, "but things have been getting beyond a joke. People treat the cottage as if it were a public museum, and me as if I were an exhibit. I came here for peace and quiet. Of course, after what you've told me, there's nothing more for me to say except to beg your pardon and thank you for what you've done." He paused for a moment. "I'm very sorry about the little girl," he added. "If I'd known that—— But you can't have the least idea of what I've been through."

"Yes, you're very famous, aren't you?" she exclaimed, with sudden bitterness. "Too famous to care what becomes of a

little girl you haven't seen."

This was not strictly just, and William

protested feebly.

"I don't know why you should think that," he said. "Besides, I'm suffering for my brother's sins. He lent me the cottage—to get away from all this, I suppose. I've never written or thought or said an original line of poetry in my life. I tell people that, but they won't believe me. My name's Bree all right, but I'm not Stanislaus Bree. I hate the stuff he writes as badly as you do, and as much as all these sentimental young girls seem to love it."

She stared at him in growing wonder, then suddenly turned away. To his horror he saw her shoulders heave, her whole body

quiver

"Help!" thought William. "What, in the name of Heaven, have I done now?"

She leaned an arm against the tree and rested her face against it, while he hovered around her. There is no golden rule as to how to behave when a woman cries. He lingered about her for a few moments, feeling extremely foolish, then ground his teeth at the mental picture of himself, and became the man of action.

Gently but firmly he took her by the shoulders and removed her from the tree. Then he led her to a small boulder of rock protruding from the grass, sat her down upon it, and himself sat down beside her.

"And now," he said, "as all this seems to concern me in some way, you are going

to tell me all about it."

She would not or could not speak at first. He waited for her, gravely patient and

sympathetic.

"I'm sorry," she said at last. "It's because of Doris, my sister. She's thirteen. She just lives for your—I mean your brother's—books, and she's pining away to meet you—him. She's had an operation, and she may have to have another. The doctors recommended this coast, so my mother and I took her down to Tregarnock. When she heard you—I mean your brother—lived here, she was wild to meet him. She talks of nothing else. If you—he—would only come and see her, it might do her more good than surgery or medicine. But you famous men, of course . . . you don't want . . . you haven't time . . ."

He noted that she still had him confused with Stanislaus in her mind, but he let that

pass without comment.

"Why didn't you or—or your mother drop my brother a line, explaining the circumstances and asking him to call?"

"My mother did. It was rather an awkward letter to write. We understood that Mr. Stanislaus Bree lived a very retired life and did not like meeting people."

"What—wouldn't he come?"
"We—we haven't had a reply."

William frowned heavily and then sud-

denly laughed.

"No, of course not. I've been keeping his letters for him until I get his latest address. It's probably lying unopened in the cottage now. By the way, it's teatime now."

"Yes." She made a little half-hearted

movement. "I must be going."

He looked at her reproachfully.

"Well, aren't you going to ask me?"

"Ask you?"

"To tea with-er-Doris. I haven't a

line of poetry in me, but I dare say I can pose as my brother well enough to deceive her. If you'll only ask me, I'll come along with you now. Poor old Stanislaus! I never thought I should wear his mantle."

She uttered a little joyous sound and laid

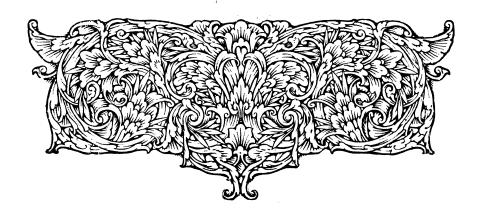
an excited hand upon his arm.
"Oh," she cried, "you don't mean that!" But he did.

Now it so chanced that William belied himself when he said that he had not a line of poetry in him, for mark well the sequel. A month later, when the improvement

in Doris's health was confounding the wise men of Harley Street, he spoke a line of real original poetry to Doris's sister.

It was only a short line, but the finest line in this and every language in the world. Every man has said it in his day, and some, alas, have said it too often! But it is original every time it is uttered-it being a magic line—and loses none of its freshness by repetition, through a secret reason known only to lovers. It has quickened pulses since the beginning of time, and has sounded sweet in all tongues, whether the lover said Amo te, or Je vous aime, or I love you.

The last was what William said.



TO A BEE.

BOLD vagrant of the yellow-buskinned feet, Your busy day begins before the signs Of wayside inns of thyme and meadowsweet: And where the laggard host too long reclines Within the lordly tavern of the rose, With your loud tune you summon him to wake And his fast petal-shutters to unclose, And start the day's carousals for your sake.

Ah, it is wise, while Summer is your friend, To take her timely gifts and store away Food for rare feasts, that Winter shall descend To find you proof against his evil day. So grant that, when my days grow brief and cold, I feed on hoarded dreams of summer gold.

PERCY HASELDEN.

THE MODERN CHILD IN THE ART OF MR. HARRINGTON MANN

By AUSTIN CHESTER

Portraits reproduced by permission of the owners of the originals

HERE are as many methods of painting as there are painters, but, roughly speaking, methods have hitherto had a tendency to fall into groups. Of these, there are the classical, the romantic, the imaginative, the prosaic, the realistic, the idealistic, the florid, the austere, and so on. Yet, varied as are the methods in which paint can be used, each and all are right; for the genius of the master comes through the open meshes of each method, the entire self-effacement of the artist being as little possible as is his achievement of a strict literalism.

Thus in every style of painting we get distinct examples of the individualities of each of those painters who have collectively sought to label themselves as belonging to certain schools. Adherence to a school is, indeed, often no more than an exhibition of the special artist's distaste for those mannerisms which are to be observed in followers of other schools; for the painter, as Schiller says, is "actually best known to

us through his omissions."

It is the business of the critic to identify, not so much the style or school in which a man elects to work, as the particular artistic excellence which is portrayed by its means. We know that the critic is assumed to be the man who has failed to gain mastery over the medium the use of which by others he attempts to criticise. Although the phrase has become "a commonplace of the schools," it was coined to cover the critic with opprobrium. Yet the very fact that he has served his apprenticeship to art actually enables him to see a little further into the artist's intention than can the man who has had no such training.

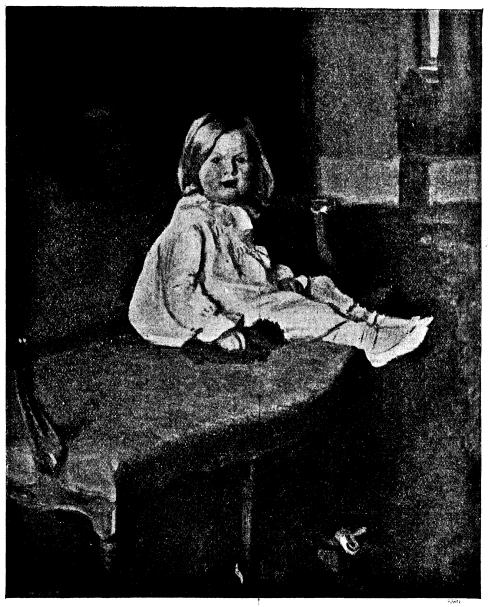
Should science ever come to the help of

the critic, perhaps some measure will be devised by means of which the painter's exact place in the hierarchy of talent can be gauged, something like a thermometer which will register the exact point of excellence to which he has attained; but until that instrument is made, the critic will be guided in his criticism by a little general knowledge and a vast amount of personal opinion.

To "see the object as in itself it really is" is Matthew Arnold's counsel of perfection to the man who sets out to appraise in one medium the exact quality of the work of his fellow-man in another medium.

I have to confess myself incapable of following Arnold's instruction when I try correctly to place the work of Mr. Harrington Mann, for its good points "jump to the eyes," which are thus rendered incapable of seeing clearly the faults which common-sense tells me must exist somewhere in this artist's extraordinarily skilful portraits of children.

If we look at the wealth of child portraiture which has been bequeathed to us, it would seem that the child, as subject, is the especial favourite of the really gifted painter. There is the "Las Menenas" of Velasquez; "The Age of Innocence" of Reynolds; "The Blue Boy" of Gainsborough; the "Miss Alexander" of Whistler; the "Harriet Machonochie" of Dyce; the "Master Baby" of Orchardson; the "Beatrice Goelet" of Sargent. Some few years ago—it is possibly there still—there was on the walls of Kensington Palace a "half-length" of a baby of between two and three years of age. The name of the baby and the name of the painter have slipped into some oubliette of memory, but



DAUGHTER OF MR. AND MRS. JOHN Q. ROWETT.

From a portrait by Harrington Mann.

visually the work remains with me as worthy of ranking side by side with these few enumerated examples of that astonishing and abundant talent which has been devoted to child portraiture.

Nor is it to be wondered at that the child should be the favourite medium for the painter's art, for his eyes are mirrors of infinite beauty. Looking into them, past their reflective capacity, we see them as storehouses of intuitive precocity, wise happiness in deduction, and we often descry an accidental shrewdness which is almost astonishingly uncanny; but we see them brimming these worldly traits as clear pools which vividly reflect that vast amount of physical beauty which lies about us. No wonder, then, that in the portrayal of the child the painter is inspired to excel.

The artist of yesterday seems to have suffered from bashfulness, for he was inclined to gather conventions from his forerunners and use them as shields to place before his personal expression. Certainly he suffered from a self-consciousness which made him hesitate to rely on his inward sense of things.

specially distinguished the art of both Reynolds and Gainsborough. In spite of the pleasurable stimulus which



ELIZABETH, DAUGHTER OF MR. AND MRS. MESSMORE KENDALL.

From a portrait by Harrington Mann.

Thus we find the work of many men of vesterday to be presented to us through that screen of thin facile suavity which

is to be found in the cutting of new paths, great courage is required by the man who departs from the roads of academic



JULIET, DAUGHTER OF MR. AND MRS. FREDERIC WISE.

From a portrait by Harrington Mann,

precedence. But the artist of to-day seeks to do this. He is apparently more sure of himself than is the artist of yesterday. His inclination is to disregard conventions and to break new ground.

style can be shown with any advantage, is quite certain.

Balzac, rather than Carlyle, was responsible for the often-quoted *cliché* that "genius is the infinite capacity for taking pains"



CHILDREN OF SIR EDWARD MACKAY EDGAR, BART, AND LADY EDGAR. From a portrait-group by Harrington Mann.

The reason for this may be that, by means of arduous scientific training, he feels capable of evolving a personal technique; for that technique has to be acquired and perfected, before anything like personal

Balzac in evolving and Carlyle in echoing the phrase sacrificed truth in the making of an epigram. At best it holds but a half truth. What both these great writers intended to express was that only through the infinite capacity of taking pains can even genius become articulate.

Many a painter to-day remains inarticulate because he has been insufficiently trained. This is not the case with Mr.

that he is absolute master of his material. He has possibly a keen apprehension of his own limitations, but by means of an admirable craftsmanship he illustrates that truth which Flaubert asserted—that "there is no



VISCOUNT MOORE AND LADY PATRICIA MOORE, SON AND DAUGHTER OF THE EARL AND COUNTESS OF DROGHEDA.

From a portrait-group by Harrington Mann.

Harrington Mann. His technique is peculiarly fluent; his art, as a consequence, is extraordinarily personal. In looking at his work, one is at once struck with the fact

beauty of form without beauty of thought. since the idea itself exists but by virtue of its form."

The children of Mr. Harrington Mann's

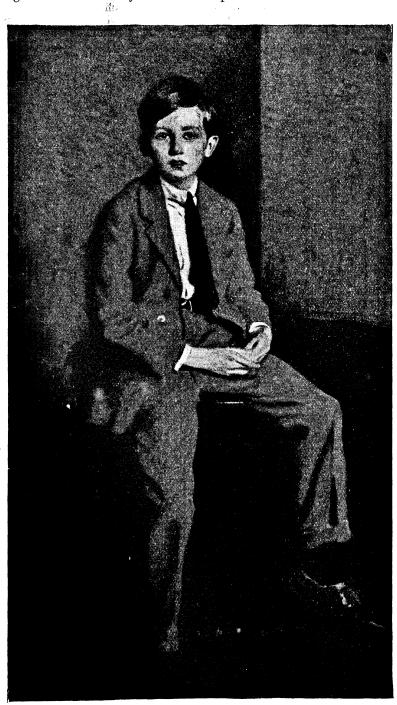
brush are also the children of his insight. His pictures are illustrated "songs of innocence." The small figures are vitalised by

his sensitive and fastidious selection of some moment which has been seen to illuminate their character amongst many moments which reveal no such light. This is the moment of each small sitter which Mr. Mann has portrayed. Note, for instance, the bright, vivid personality of little Miss Rowett, too young to be self-conscious, and then compare the painter's realisation of the increased tendency to anxiety -the wish to oblige, perhaps the painter, perhaps her mother in the more conscious expression and attitude of the Lady Amy Agar, and from this one may pass to the touch of almost domestic responsibility with which Miss Elizabeth Kendall is holding her favourite rabbit; and the grave sense of responsibility naturally gives an almost

wistful touch of sentiment to the slightly older child whose problem is to inspire her own father to a masterpiece. She

certainly suc-

ceeded to the extent of leading the authorities of the Public Art Gallery of Ghent to purchase the result of her



SON OF COLONEL AND MRS. DARELL.

From a portrait by Harrington Mann.



DAUGHTER OF COLONEL AND MRS. DARELL.
From a portrait by Harrington Mann.

inspiration for their permanent collection.

Selection is a faculty desperately difficult to

which are essential to true portraiture. "Trailing clouds of glory" have they "come from God who is their home." The adaptation of Wordsworth's famous lines is an act of faith by the parents who apply them to their own children. Mr.

exercise, because it has to make its choice amongst materials which in their combination are practically infinite. Mr. Mann, however, succeeds in presenting his subject to us in the imaginative, higher mood which the lover of children somewhat arbitrarily assumes to be its ordinary wear. The children of Sir Edward Edgar, of the Right Hon. Sir Reginald McKenna, of Patrick J. Ford, Esq., of the Earl of Drogheda, of Harold Arkright, Esq., and of Captain George Warre, show each some single vivacious image of our serious childhood at its most characteristic. They show also a jealous exclusion by the artist of nonessentials, and each canvas reveals, by means of a natural opulence in the use of paint, that vigour and peculiar personality of the subject which are essen-



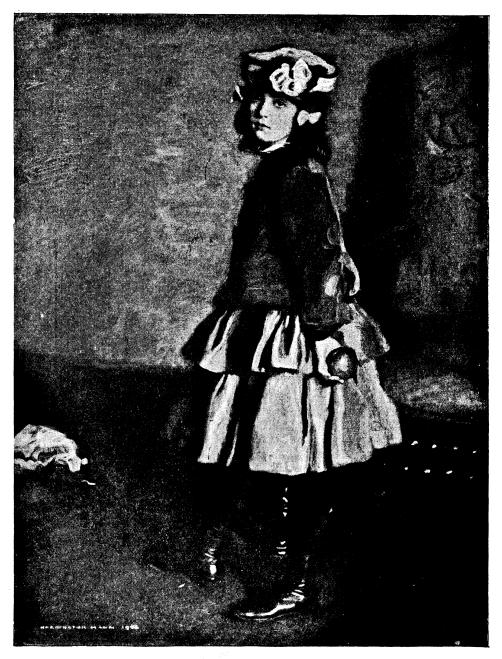
THE LADY AMY AGAR, DAUGHTER OF THE EARL AND COUNTESS OF NORMANTON.

From a portrait by Harrington Mann.

Mann not only sees the trail of glory, but demonstrates his sight in paint. He seeks and finds moments and qualities which are curled up in the memory of father or mother, and, disinterring them, makes them live. His picture of "Tony," son of Captain Walter H. Samuels, is an interesting illustration of his understanding of the feeling of a little boy who, as I once

heard a child of similar age say, "felt shy inside." Yet, unlike some painters of pretty children of the tenderest years, he understands also the gathering realisation of boyhood's advance into youth, and this is well depicted in the portrait study of the son of Colonel and Mrs. Darell.

In each portrait the work is so frankly planked down as to appear finished (as it



CATHLEEN, DAUGHTER OF THE ARTIST.

From the portrait by Harrington Mann, now in the Museum of Ghent, reproduced by permission of the Conservator.

is) in the act of creation. There is no trace of retouching or of afterthought. Nor are there any visible stage trappings. There is barely a suggestion of furniture accessory; certainly there is none of anything superfluous. Plainly and rightly Mr. Harrington Mann questions the permissibility of inessentials upon a canvas which is meant primarily

to be a portrait. His frugal backgrounds keep their places, and however vivid is their handling, however strong and sincere is their treatment, they remain undisturbing, fastidiously chosen, economic adjuncts to the figures.

Words, as we have already suggested, are but a poor medium in which to describe the



MRS. NAT D. AYER AND HER SON.
From a portrait-group by Harrington Mann.

sister art of colour. When they seek to conjure up a particular quality of colour, they are bound to fail. To say that little "Peter Scott" is painted in a blue "overall" conveys no idea of the quality of a blue which is a very distinctive note in the excellence of the picture as a whole. Blue may be of almost any hue. It may be used to mean the larkspur of a hot summer's sky at its zenith; it may equally mean the

delicate tonality of the periwinkle, or even the luminous vibrations that shade from light to dark in a Cornish sea, which, in shadow, is almost as purple as the blue known as "royal." To say that blue holds both green and red, as is the case in the portrait of "Master Peter Scott," conveys very little notion of the glorious quality of his "overall." Even black and white hold a thousand colour gradations. There is white

in light and white in shadow, and, apart from these lights and shades of the same substance, various substances hold each their several widely different colours—the white of snow, the white of ivory, and the white of may flowers, are distinct one from the other. Black has as many varieties, and the portrait labelled "Tony," when recently exhibited, is an admirable example of its capricious differences. The boy's black hair is shown—and, I am sure, truly—to have taken shades of purple which are but little removed from those which distinguish the purple of his dress. The bold originality of the artist's colour-schemes is seen at the most striking in one of his latest portraits, that of the daughter of Colonel and Mrs. Darell.

Happiness is not only distinctly an attribute of these portraits, but its recognition seems to have been laid upon the canvases as a tribute to that quality by Happiness, indeed, is the their painter. keynote of the subject-portrait " Mona and Her Dolls," which has found a home in the National Art Gallery of Sydney; and it is echoed in "Good Morning!" which has been purchased for Melbourne's National collection.

"The Children of Mr. George X. Mac-Lanahan" is a portrait-group which may be taken as an example of Mr. Harrington Mann's unerring ability in design. This canvas and that of "The Children of Sir Edward Mackay Edgar, Bart.," and that also of little "Juliet Wise," are, from both a happy and a decorative point of view, positive achievements.

Among the pictures here reproduced we have included one—the portrait-group of Mrs. Nat D. Ayer and her son—which happily represents the artist's dual reputation as a painter of the modern woman as well as of the type of childhood and youth chiefly considered in this article, of which the scope has been suggested by Mr. Mann's latest exhibition, consisting solely of his records of child life and character.

The pictures which we reproduce, and many others, evidence the originality and versatility which Mr. Mann has brought to his work, and which, indeed, have established his very considerable and still growing

reputation.

It is the youth that has to decide his manhood's career. It is the youth that has to determine his "bearings as by compass in the world of thought," and ascertain, not only his precise bent, but how much perseverance he intends to bring to its furtherance.

When the youth looks to the horizon of time, it is to see there the mirage of success superimposed. He has no exact estimate of the distance he may have to travel, but, if he is an artist in temperament, he goes forward with an almost religious determination to "arrive." Mr. Harrington Mann took his bearings very early, and brought infinite perseverance to furtherance of his ambitions.

He worked first under Legros at the Slade School. Then, with adventure, he sought to study the masterpieces of Italy, that he might gain a sense of his own limitations and gauge the length of the road he had, in art, to travel.

Then determinedly he set to work in the Glasgow School, which, as a place of art education, has trained some of our most brilliant artists.

In recent years Mr. Harrington Mann has spent a considerable time in America. He is a member of the International Society of Portrait Painters, the National Portrait Society, and the International Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Gravers of London.



THE COOLNESS

By LAURENCE NORTH

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

T was in the Messengers' Room, very probably, that the thing first took definite shape in words, although for · some time past it had been apparent, more or less vaguely, to the Department.

"Seems to me," Albert Binns remarked to William Watford, "as Mr. Fleming an' Mr. Blackmore isn't quite so thick as they

used to be."

Watford fixed a sharp grey eye on the golden crown that adorned the lapel of his colleague's blue official uniform, and replied: "You've 'it it, Binns. There's a something, an' it ain't just 'ard to guess the reason."

"No, you're not far off it, I reckon," Albert agreed, eyeing William's official badge in turn. "The Service ain't what it was afore the War. Too many outsiders, male

an' female."
"Perticklerly female," continued Watford, with oracular emphasis. He nodded, and, bending over a black japanned tray, began to gather up an armful of ponderous files and a sheaf of narrow blue envelopes marked "Office Transit only." those Temporaries were all sacked. They've outstayed their welcome, Albert. All very well, perhaps, when the 'Un was 'ammerin' at the door, but we don't want 'em now. The Civil Service is goin' to the dogs. Wot O! There's Mr. Fleming's bell again! I tell you, Binns, I goes in there fifty times a day now for once as it used to be, and all for wot d'ye think? Oh, drat 'un-impatience!" he added, as the bell interposed with a second and most unmistakably peremptory summons. Whatever weighty communication Mr. Watford was on the point of making to Mr. Binns had perforce to be postponed, as William, six foot of grizzled dignity, and injured at that, strode away along the echoing marble corridors to do Mr. Fleming's bidding.

In a few seconds he returned emptyhanded, and more sour than ever in looks. He seemed explosive, but found no immediate satisfactory outlet, for in the meantime Mr. Binns had been called elsewhere. There is no rest for the Mercuries of Whitehall. Growling to himself, William resumed his sorting of papers, to assist their eternal passage from room to room on missions of

mingled utility and futility.

Some miles along the corridor, ground floor, to the right, round two corners, in Room No. 13 of the Ministry of Dumps and Doldrums, sat the two gentlemen upon whom Mr. W. Watford, Messenger, was appointed to wait. They were not William's only protégés—he had a good many others —but Messrs. Fleming and Blackmore interested him especially. It had become a melancholy interest, yet not untouched with a pained benevolence, for, despite present inconveniences, the Messenger held these two Administrative Officers in the highest respect. They were Permanent Staff men, no frivolous temporary interlopers, lingering, like butterflies out of season, in places where they had no business to be. William had seen the pair enter the Service as bright young men haloed with glowing examination honours; he had watched their steady rise to place and power, Fleming always a little ahead, but Blackmore ever at his heels. William had watched with pride, too, their perfect moulding to official pattern, as years passed and promotion came. Approving, he noted the gradual refining of feature, the eye that became daily colder and more penetrating, the growing hesitancy of manner, the increasing dread of independent action, the cumulative habit of reference to others, the conscientious zeal to put everything, no matter how trivial, in writing, and to get the Minute registered—all the symptoms, in a word, of the finished Civil Servant. And withal came slight touches of silver about the temples, and in Fleming's case an undeniable hint of baldness on the crown, for they were no longer in the heyday of youth. But they held gallant touch with elegance, had kept their waist-line unbulged, and neither could have been called old. They dressed with entire propriety, observing fashion without extravagance; they had both manner and appearance, and, being bachelors with comfortable incomes and further prospects, were still included among the eligible young men on the invitation lists of careful mothers. Always just on the doubtful edge of service age as that age rose, they would have served in the War gladly, but the Department decreed otherwise. Messrs. Osbert Fleming and Henry Blackmore were indispensable. Luckily they could not, in fairness, be called Cuthberts. They felt their stav-at-home position, but accepted it as their bit of the national sacrifice, and in that spirit they carried on. Watford and Binns, drafted late into the Army, they envied heartily, and for about eighteen months they put up patiently with inferior service. Another little bit for Freedom and the Empire! But the most beautiful thing about the pair was their unbroken friendship. "Fleming and Black-more, the old firm," had become a proverb in the Ministry and even in other Whitehall William Watford, the philosophic observer of men and women, had come to regard it as a Departmental institution, a thing inviolate and worshipful, steadfast as the hills, unchangeable and immovable as the War Office itself.

With sorrow too deep for tears, therefore, William discovered, on his return from Mesopotamia — sergeant-major with D.C.M.—that things were not as they had been at the Dumps and Doldrums. The first day, on entering the Fleming and Blackmore presence, he had a shock. Formerly the colleagues sat face to face at desks pushed so close together as actually to touch. To say "desks" is inaccurate, for Mr. Fleming's rank and salary alone entitled him to a pedestal desk with knee-hole and a range of drawers down to the floor on each side. Blackmore had to be content with a large leather-covered writing-table, with turned legs and three drawers side by side just below the top. Officialdom delights in these fine distinctions of degree. Watford. amazed and regretful, saw that desk and table no longer adjoined. Whereas they had stood side on to the two windows, now they faced them, one to each, at an interval of several inches; consequently Fleming and Blackmore sat with their faces to the light and their backs to the door. There was no mistaking the heartiness of their welcome to Watford, but that functionary felt in his bones, as he would have put it, that he had, in the manner of speaking, two detached

welcomes. The greeting had nothing co-operative in it; each officer breathed cordiality, but seemed to speak for himself alone. Neither said, "We are glad to see you back, Watford"; each said, "I am glad," and William noticed the stress on the pronoun. It chilled him slightly, giving him an uncomfortable sense of instability, accentuated by the altered position of the desk and table. That night he thought about it a good deal. Frankly, he didn't like it.

The bell to the Messengers' Room was not the only one installed for the convenience of Messrs. Fleming and Blackmore. At their volant touch, another rang in the room adjoining their own. It summoned Miss Hester Langleybury, a young lady of wonderful energy and attraction, accomplished, capable, beautiful in the modern pug acceptation of the term, arch, sparkling, bobbed as to the abundant auburn hair, elegant as to dress, and clearly not supported by her salary alone. She had appeared at Whitehall when Watford was absent in the field, and to that worthy her presence signified many distressful things. Hester's friends—a numerous and distinguished retinue, mostly titled-were fully persuaded that she ran the Ministry, although her qualifications had few or no points in common with Dumps and Doldrums. But the illusion pleased her noble friends and herself, and, as we have said, she was supremely capable. She understood the art of tea, and transcribed her shorthand notes no worse than others, when she could read them. When she could not, her superiors cheerfully filled in the blanks.

From the day Hester entered the Service (Temporary) Fleming and Blackmore saw life in new colours. Their work acquired an interest beyond that of routine, but for a time neither suspected the other of any unofficial emotion. The first revealing hint came on a summer morning, when Fleming beheld Blackmore and Blackmore beheld Fleming enter with a bouquet of choice flowers in his hand. Neither made any remark, and during the morning the flowers somehow disappeared. Latish in the afternoon, but before Fleming and Blackmore had returned from lunch, Hester came in with a vase containing a portion of her flowers, and set it accurately and impartially on the line where desk and table met. Then she retired smiling.

"Hullo!" said Fleming, entering with his colleague.



"Hullo!" echoed Blackmore. They looked at each other and seemed about to speak, but words failed them, and in silence they settled down to mark files. For the first time something had come between them. The situation was sufficiently awkward. The thing wasn't in order—an innovation—but how to meet it without seeming churlish, there was the rub!

Fortunately, or unfortunately, Authority intervened in the person of the Chief Establishment Officer, who paid a chance visit. He looked at the flowers and, stooping down, smelt them.

"Very sweet and pretty," he remarked genially, "but not, as I needn't remind you, exactly in accordance with custom. I can guess the fons et origo. Sit on it gently, please, or the office will be swamped. We mustn't create a precedent. This isn't Covent Garden." And out he went, laughing in happy innocence.

If the Establishment Officer had found a situation slightly strained, he left it tense.

It was Blackmore who broke the silence. "As you're senior officer," he said, "perhaps it would come best from you, Fleming."

"Naturally," replied Fleming, in a tone he had never used before to Blackmore. The junior felt the snub and retreated into his papers. Until tea-time they spoke only on official matters. At four o'clock, when Miss Langleybury came in to perform the pleasant social duty, an unusual formality reigned. Her brightest gossip fell flat. Blackmore wondered how Fleming's diplomacy would get round the awkward admonition. Just as Hester rose to go, the senior remarked casually: "Oh, by the by, Miss Langleybury—yes—ah—um—let me see, please take this letter—to the Minister's Private Secretary—"

"Coward!" said Blackmore to himself, as the dictation proceeded. When it was finished, he detained Hester further and handed her a paper to copy, adding:



"Thank you very much for these." And he nodded towards the vase.

"You need something to brighten up this dingy place, and you gave me such lots!"

dingy place, and you gave me such lots!" Awfully good of you," said Blackmore. And Hester went out, flinging her most bewitching smile at both men. Fleming turned to his colleague with cold censure—

"Your remark, Blackmore, was rather uncalled for"

"Merely common civility."

"Perhaps, but you have made it difficult for me to suggest that Miss Langleybury really mustn't do such things." "Sorry, old man. Pity you didn't get it off your chest at once and have done with it. Anyhow, my opinions don't matter where your authority is concerned. You're head of this branch."

"Obviously. And I shall continue to be

head."

"Oh, well—but——" Blackmore checked himself and returned to his work. Until five-thirty they ground along dismally, growing more official at every exchange of routine observations. That afternoon was the beginning of sorrow. They did not leave the office together. Fleming said he must sit late.

Independently and unknown to his colleague, each officer, before leaving, gave an order to the person who was acting as Watford's substitute. Next morning desk and table stood several inches apart. longer could any token of good-will be set impartially upon the line of junction, which had ceased to exist. The flowers languished on the mantelpiece. During the day they disappeared. Miss Langleybury could take a hint. But she gave Fleming a bad mark. Blackmore, at least, had been civil about her simple little act of friendliness. future, with subtle suggestion, but no blatant distinction, she would be "nicer," if anything, in her manner to Mr. Blackmore. Subtle Hester might be, but the little difference did not escape Mr. Fleming. He, poor man, had seen visions and dreamed dreams, rather late in life and therefore the more upsetting. Jealousy racked him with torturing cramps. Blackmore had stolen a mean march on his chief.

"I think," said Fleming, stung to a weak and unwise allusion, "my ingenious little

device has been quite successful."
"What device?" Blackmore asked in

surprise.
"Separating the desk and the table."

" Your device? Mine, I think. I told the Messenger to do it."

Perhaps in future you will " Indeed! remember, Mr. Blackmore, that the arrangement of furniture in this room rests with me."

Blackmore blushed very red, but merely replied: "Very well-all right." He thought he could afford to ignore temper in his colleague. He, too, had seen visions, and Hester's recent "niceness" flattered him to a fine magnanimity towards less fortunate men. Still, he regretted the waning of the old, cordial, brotherly relations. But both could not win her. A man must make hay while the sun shone.

A day or two later (not at Blackmore's order) the desk and table stood in the still more estranged position that had so sorely pained Watford on his return from foreign service. Constraint now became intense and work a burden. The old jovial interludes of small-talk relieved toil no longer. cheerful pushing of papers across and across to each other, with "Look at that, old

man," or "Just give me your opinion on this," had become physically and morally impossible. When Hester came in to take dictation, the self-conscious dictator floundered, making irritating pauses and corrections—sometimes he even drivelled. In happier days neither man had been aware of the other's presence at such times. Now it drove him frantic. Through it all Hester preserved an exasperating calm. The deeper the man wallowed in futilities, the more exquisitely she smiled. From irritation Fleming and Blackmore declined into something perilously near to hate. Blackmore took longer to reach that regrettable stage, but Fleming drove him to it by arranging to have a separate room for the dictation of documents other than mere letters. did not offer Blackmore the use of it, and Blackmore was too proud to ask that favour. Thereafter they remained scarcely on speaking terms. This sad state of things led to yet another shift, and henceforward they sat back to back, as far apart as possible, each with his desk or table pushed close up to an opposite wall. For the most part they now communicated in writing. It was inconvenient to the last degree, and wasteful of time, when papers had to be exchanged, but it was better than seeing each other with the corner of one's eye. There, in grumpy isolation, these foolish gentlemen toiled and fed upon Hester's image, actually present or fondly imagined in absence.

It was Fleming who took the ultra-official step that led to a solution, although he did not foresee such a result. On that morning when something exasperating happened, and William Watford all but confided his new sorrow to Albert Binns, Fleming, weary of jumping up and down in the discharge of his official duties, had an inspiration. After all, he reflected, it was the correct procedure. Any other was mere convenient compromise and not strictly in order. He had just finished a note, a buff slip headed simply with the recipient's name. It began, "With a view to," repeated the saving phrase "if any" at the close of nearly every clause, and ended by requesting "your immediate attention, please." This he initialled O. F., adding the date in neat figures, 2/7/20, and put the paper in a green "Office Transit Only" envelope, which he addressed. To it he pinned a label with "URGENT" in large red letters, and ${f another}$ "DIRECT" in black type equally bold. These solemnities completed, he rang the bell.

Mr. Watford appeared. To him Fleming

handed the packet without a word. The Messenger glanced casually at the direction. At the door he paused and stood for a moment while he gave the envelope a closer and slightly hesitating scrutiny. Then, with just a smothered suspicion of a grunt, he came back and placed the envelope softly in Mr. Blackmore's "In" tray.

Blackmore reached out his hand and took the paper. He controlled any emotion he may have felt, and wrote his reply at once, directing it with precisely the same ceremonies as those observed by Mr. Fleming. Then he, too, rang the bell, and William Watford made courteous delivery as before. But beneath William's well-trained deference lurked rebellion, yet rebellion with benevolent purpose.

It was taking risks, the Messenger knew, but he had a deep regard for Messrs. Fleming and Blackmore. It "didn't seem right" to William that two such normally pleasant officials and old friends should split about less than nothing and go knocking their heads against a brick wall. If only they knew what Mr. Watford knew, and, indeed, most of the staff knew, except their two blind selves, there would be an end of this nonsense, and a happy restoration of peace, harmony, and brotherly love, which same William liked to see and was proud of as between his gentlemen. And all for an "'ussy of a Temporary, too, wich it was 'igh time she went about 'er business."

Mr. Watford took all the afternoon to reflect. His resolution was strengthened by repeated calls to effect Office Transit Only, Urgent, Direct, between two officers seated almost within arm's length of each other. Yes, he would risk it. Accordingly, when he came in to clear the "Out" tray for the last post, he found his chance and took it. Just at that moment Hester had looked in, well before statutory time, with her usual formal question: "Shall you want me for anything more to-night?" Its honeyed tone

challenged only one possible answer. When a lady asks prettily, what can a man say?

Together Fleming and Blackmore signified a gloomy negative, and Hester, devastating their poor hearts with the sweetest of "Good nights," departed, adding with less fatal effect: "Good night, Watford."

"Good night, miss," said William without

"Good night, miss," said William without emotion, as he gathered up papers. Then, watching the lady retire, he took his cue from her retreating figure, and said with the respectful assurance of old service and a most reprehensible hypocrisy: "It'll seem duller-like when Miss Langleybury goes, sir."

"Your information is superior to mine, Watford," Fleming replied, with a glance of frost; "I know nothing of any such impending change."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, sir. I don't suppose it's official, but I thought you'd perhaps 'eard the great news."

"What news?" Blackmore demanded

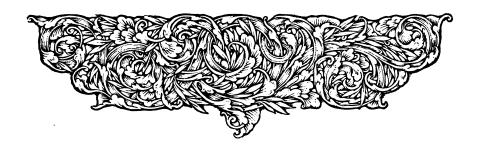
with incautious eagerness.

"It's no secret, sir. I understand this afternoon the parties got the Publicity Officer to 'elp them to write out a notice for to-morrow's Morning Ghost. You see, gentlemen, it's like this," William added, realising that his hearers were still puzzled, "Miss Langleybury's just got engaged to the Minister's Private Secretary. That's all there is to it, sir."

He went out, discreet-footed and sly-eyed, but with the air of a man who has done great things. What passed in that room after he had closed the door on the two colleagues, no man knoweth, but William had his reward at six o'clock, when he saw Fleming and Blackmore leave the office, as of old, arm-in-arm.

"And by the way, Watford," said Fleming, as they passed the Messengers' Room, "just put my desk and Mr. Blackmore's table together again as they

used to be-facing."



THE INEVITABLE INGRAM

By RALPH STOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

THERE was something going on out there to the westward. The sunset was the same miracle of beauty that it usually is near the Equator, pearl-grey, rose-tinged islands of cloud floating in amethyst, but below and beyond them there hovered a grey-green void that slowly spread like some disfiguring disease over the fair face of the sky. And the heat! It was slow asphyxiation.

Ingram had seen and felt all this before. Once, in his overseering days, it had heralded the wiping of a vast estate from the face of the earth like a drawing from a slate. And again, only six years earlier, it had spelt the mowing of a neat swathe through three bungalows, a medley of "labour lines," and five hundred acres of young rubber. It had not meant very much to him in those days; the devastated properties were not his, and as a spectacle it had been magnificent. But now—

He leant out over the verandah railing, a gaunt, anxious figure in the encroaching gloom. Twice he looked back over his shoulder before speaking. Through the mosquito door streamed a flood of homely yellow light. His wife sat beside the wicker table, sewing. Ingram's grip of the verandah railing tightened.

"Olive!" he called softly.

She came, a pale wisp of a woman in the loose, flowing wrapper of the Islands, and stood beside him at the rail.

"Yes?" she said.

"There's something coming up," said Ingram, staring over the sea. "It may be something, and it may be nothing, but it's the season, and we ought to be ready."

"What had I better do?" she asked him

in a low, colourless voice.

"Take whatever you value on to the hill," he told her—"Roko, the sewing-

machine, anything. I'll be there in a few minutes."

She went into the living-room and stood for a moment looking about her. "Anything she valued!" She smiled. It was so like Bob to imagine there was anything—on Tahao.

Roko, the fox-terrier sybarite, was engaged in lethargic fly-catching operations on his favourite mat. The sewing-machine in its intensely varnished case, with gold lettering, reflected the lamplight with customary brilliance. A dog and a sewing-machine! She took them to the "hill" as directed, and sat in the sand with her alleged valuables on either hand, waiting.

Tahao was an atoll, and what Bob persisted with ludicrous gravity in calling the "hill" was the highest point on it, at least ten feet above the level of the sea. From its summit one commanded a view of perhaps a mile more ocean than could be seen from the beach. Also it afforded a refuge for those who wished to cling to the last delectable moments of life if the sea saw fit to inundate Tahao, which was entirely probable.

Through the stagnant darkness sounds filtered up to the "hill "—Bob's deep-toned exhortations to the two "boys," their jabbered response, the methodical thud of a maul, the crackle and scrape of corrugated iron. Olive knew precisely what was going on. They were driving pegs deep into the ground at the four corners of the house, and passing wires over the roof to hold it down. This their home must be anchored to Tahao at all costs. Bob would see to that. He invariably saw to everything. Life, even on Tahao, was of such immense importance to him

Olive sat with hands clasped about her knees. She had thought her mind long

since numb, but to-night, in face of the omnipotent threat hovering on the horizon, she found herself piecing together the twisted fragments of her married life like an ineffectual puzzle.

* * * * *

No one could have faced heavy odds with more fortitude, more thoroughness, and less avail than Bob Ingram. As incapable of recognising defeat as of accomplishing victory, he staggered to his feet after each reverse and fought on with an ox-like stolidity that Olive knew to be heroic, and blamed herself for finding exasperating.

For three years he had striven to make a home for the woman he loved. It was here—on Tahao. Then had come the vanilla boom. According to Bob, there was nothing like vanilla. The demand was unlimited. In five years, or less, they would be in a position to instal a manager, and live where there were cool rains and other things worth having. Well, either vanilla did not like Tahao, or Tahao did not like vanilla. After eighteen months of precarious existence, as wearing to the nerves of its attendants as that of an exacting invalid, it died.

But what of that? A trading cutter was the thing! Freight rates were fantastic. The vessel would pay for herself in a year, and then—— These were the days when Bob's enthusiasms were infectious. With considerable pomp the cutter was christened Olive, and reduced to matchwood a month

later on a neighbouring reef.

This was a calamity. There was no denying it. For a whole day Bob patrolled the verandah in subdued fashion, but at breakfast the next morning he returned to the attack with redoubled vigour. appeared that he had explored Tahao lagoon as never before, and there was bêchede-mer there, quantities of it. He explained, with the rekindled light of enthusiasm in his pale eyes, that bêche-de-mer was rapidly coming into favour as the most nutritious of table delicacies, fetching untold wealth per ton delivered in Papeete. He had figured it out, and if he worked with the "boys," there was a fortune in it within two years—or was it three? He consulted an old envelope, disfigured with pencilled calculations, and found it to be three.

Olive watched them set out in the whaleboat, saw through the telescope their pigmy figures splashing through the lagoon shallows or clambering over the reef, and towards evening the return of the heavilyladen whale-boat. Then, after a hasty meal, smoke-boxes were erected on the beach, and the task of curing the beche-de-mer was carried on into the night.

When the day's work was done, Bob flung himself, exhausted, unspeakably begrimed, but happy, into a cane chair on the

erandah.

"We're on to it now, little woman," he grinned. And Olive smiled back, wondering, as she did so, why it was so impossible for her to share his faith.

She could not watch him for long and remain inactive. On the third evening she donned a work-worn overall and plunged her hands into the revolting mess. It was necessary to impale each sea-slug on a little stick before placing it in the smokebox. Surely she could do this! But no. Bob seized her wrist on the instant and conducted her to the house like a wayward child. It was the first time she had seen him really angry.

"I won't have it!" he stormed. "Who-

ever heard of such a thing?"

Argument she knew to be worse than useless. It worried him, and that was the last thing Olive wished to do.

"Don't you see?" he pleaded later. "If I can't keep my end of things going, I'm

no good. The house is yours.'

And with the house, and its predominating features of a dog and a sewing-machine, Olive was forced to be content.

"Ten tons!" he informed her triumphantly at the end of a month. "At this rate——"

At this rate, and by recourse to the mathematical envelope, he was able to prove that the length of time required to make a fortune had been over-estimated. It was two years, after all, not three. In the meantime he had reduced himself to the semblance of a skeleton, and there was a feverish light in his eyes that Olive recognised with secret dread.

The arrival of the schooner that condescended to call at Tahao every three months was always the event that may be imagined, but on the next occasion, and after two months' intimacy with bêche-demer, it was nothing short of thrilling.

The captain, a hard-headed, soft-hearted Scot, came ashore in the whale-boat with his customary contributions of rum and cigars, and settled down on the verandah to make his brief visit the pleasant thing that it invariably was. Papeete was booming, it appeared. There was talk of a tramway—

a tramway in Papeete! Copra was soaring;

shell was rocketing-

"Ye hae nothing for me this trip?" he suggested at last. It was the invariable signal that he must be going. He always said it, and always with the tactful addition of "this trip," though he knew that not on this trip, nor on any other, would Tahao supply his schooner with a cargo.

And it was here that Bob sprang his child-like surprise on the visitor. Without a word, and labouring under intense excitement, he led the captain to the stores shed

and flung wide the doors.

From earthen floor to corrugated iron roof the place was stacked with beche-demer, representing a work comparable with the Pyramids. Had he anything "this trip"? Well, he had, that was all.

The captain advanced into the gloom, selected an immaculately cured slug from the pile, and turned it slowly on a horny palm.

"Is it all like this?" he inquired shortly.

He was talking business now. "All," stammered Bob.

The captain shook his head sadly.

"Too bad, too bad," he muttered sently. "They're 'chalk fish,' ye ken. Wouldn't pay freight these days. Now, if they'd been 'deep-water blacks' . . ."

At this juncture he stopped, because it was necessary to lift Bob Ingram from the ground and carry him to his bed, where he remained, in a state of alternate coma and delirium, for upwards of a week.

This surely was the end, Olive told herself with a secret and guilty joy. There was nothing more on Tahao to be undertaken, persisted in, and failed over. It was her turn now. She would nurse him back to health and, in the subtle ways known only to a woman, persuade him to abandon ambition for the less harried paths of content. A new interest had come into her life. Her manner changed, and Bob noticed it.

"Olive," he said one evening, during his convalescence on the verandah, "Olive,

I've been thinking"

"You mustn't-yet," she said. "Try and

rest. There's plenty of time."

He turned in his chair and looked into her eyes. "But that's just it," he said; "there isn't. I've been thinking about you."

"About me?"

"Yes. I haven't thought enough about you. You—you've been splendid '

"Good gracious, is that all?"

"Not quite. You need a change. Tahao

is no place for a woman."

So he realised that. After three years Bob realised that much. Olive's head bent lower over the needlework in her lap.

"What's the matter with clearing out for a while?" he droned on. "Sydney, San

Francisco, anywhere you like? *;

"Nothing that I can see," said Olive in a carefully controlled voice. "It would set

us up."

"Ah, I didn't mean that," he objected gently. "I can't very well get away—just now. Later, perhaps, when—when I've really got things going here." He stirred uneasily. "I've been thinking about that, too," he went on absently. "I see now where I've been going wrong. Too much of a hurry. Too much get-rich-quick. It can't be done outside of a city office, and we're on an atoll. When you come down to bedrock, there's only one thing-copra."

He paused. Olive made no comment, and

presently he went on.

"Listen!" And she listened, with the old, prophetic instinct of fatal futility, to the praises of the cocoanut palm. There was no doubt about the dried kernel of the cocoanut. It was currency, and it was indigenous to Tahao. He was a fool for not having planted up the island with it at the outset. Nothing could happen to copra. . . . And at the end of it all she said—

"But doesn't it take seven years for the

trees to bear?"

And he admitted it—admitted it with a smile on his lips and the lust of battle in his eye. But this was not what they had started out to discuss. What of the proposed holiday for Olive?

She went down to the beach and stood staring across the waste of waters at her feet. She knew that if she once left Tahao, she could not bring herself to return. She knew that she should never have married a pioneer, even loving him as she loved Bob. She was not of the type to thrive on adversity, to find each obstacle a spur to fresh endeavour. Equally, she was not of the type to abandon a ship in stress.

And so she stayed, while Bob feverishly planted cocoanuts, and raved of their rapid growth, and made calculations on envelopes, and one brazen day succeeded another until Tahao was transformed from a glaring strip of coral sand into a promising plantation of three-year-old palms, and Olive sat on the " hill " with Roko and the sewing-machine,

waiting....

They had finished fastening the house to Tahao, and silence closed down until there filtered through it a sound, faint, yet seeming to fill the world. Roko whined and snuffed the air suspiciously. The sound grew in volume, and far off the violet darkness was slashed with a thin ribbon of phosphorescent light. The sound was wind, the light was a wave, and with sudden, demoniac violence the awful pair descended on Tahao.

The roof of the bungalow snapped its puny fastenings in the first gust, and Olive heard it rattling off into the darkness like ineffectual stage thunder. Then she felt Bob's arm dragging her down to the sand. Water enveloped her. It was cool and quiet after the turmoil overhead. She hoped that it would remain. She prayed that it would remain.... But no. Bob saw to that. He invariably saw to everything. He clung to a pandanus root with one hand, and his wife with the other, and after an eternity dragged her to her feet.

They stood on the summit of the "hill," waist-deep in swirling water. There was nothing else in all the world. Tahao was gone. Olive swept the hair from her eyes and laughed, and Bob did his best to calm her hysteria. But it was not hysteria. It

was just that Tahao was gone!

Tahao was gone for little more than an hour. Thereafter Olive watched it reappear as the sea fell, inch by inch, foot by foot, under the paling sky. First the summit of the "hill" on which they stood, and a few battered tree-tops, then the beach with its chaos of debris that had once been a plantation of three-year-old palms. The eternal The Pacific subsided into a sun shone. drowsy swell.

By noon the "boys" had returned in the whale-boat, to which they had clung all night, and already Bob was superintending the erection of a pandanus lean-to.

"You've been properly through it, little woman," he said, preparing her palm frond bed for the night. "Try and sleep."

"I'm not tired," she said, raising herself on to an elbow. "And, Bob——"

" Yes ? "

"What are we going to do?"

"Do?" He stared at her dully. His face was lined with exhaustion. "Wait for the schooner."

" And then?"

It was torture to question him now. Olive knew it, and persisted. She felt that she must know, or never sleep again.

"Then you're going to get out of here,

if I know anything," he answered her shortly.

" And you?"

He stretched himself at length on his rough couch, and stared at the crazy roof, through which glimmered the stars.

"I hardly know," he said, "yet. Haven't had time to think." He swept the lank hair from his forehead with a weary gesture. "Pretty heart-breaking, isn't it?"

Olive did not answer.

"It hasn't done for the lot, though," he went on presently. "Somewhere about half, I should think——"

"Ah, about half," repeated Olive mechanically. "And if it had 'done for the lot,' it would have been the end."

"The end-of what?"

" Of Tahao."

He stared at the roof for a space. suppose so," he said slowly, with the air of one to whom such a contingency had never presented itself. "There's nothing I hate like a quitter, but I'm getting on a bit to wait another—another seven years."

"It's a long time," said Olive.

Then she saw that he was asleep. And she had been going to tell him, persuade him into seeing what manner of man he was, destined, inevitable. That there are men like that, and that it is better for such to leave the scene of their failures and start at the bottom of the ladder, if need be, so long as the chain of fatal futility be broken. But it was too late now. He was asleep. To-morrow he would wake with a fresh store of his inexhaustible, bull-headed pertinacity. He would agree that she must go, but he must stay. "There was nothing he hated like a quitter." Would she have him lie down and admit he was no good?

And so Olive said nothing the next morning, but watched him and the "boys" scouring the lagoon shallows for oddments of salvage. He was as pleased as a child when they found two sheets of the bungalow's corrugated iron roof, the sewing-machine, less ornate, but intact, and a promiscuous

assortment of tinned provisions.

So the sun-drenched days came and went as of old. Olive found it increasingly difficult to sleep, and of a night she had taken to creeping from the lean-to, past the "boys," sleeping soundly beside the dying embers of the camp fire, and up to the " hill."

From here, under a vivid moon, it seemed to her that Tahao lay outspread like a grinning skeleton, with flesh, in the form



"How long the battle lasted she had no notion . . . He

of the surviving palms and tangle of brushwood banked against them, still clinging to the bones . . .

Tahao was a bonfire, ready laid! The thought sprang at her one night like a beast of prey. Here was an end! Even he had said so. She thrust it from her, but it returned with the force of irrefutable logic. It would be better for him—in the end. She was certain of that. A flame, a mere

spark, with the trade wind behind it, and the thing was done. It could so easily happen . . . the camp fire . . . no one would guess . . . and after a time, when he had found his niche back there in the world, she would tell him—she would have to tell him—and he would laugh. They would laugh together over Tahao.

What was it that made her pause for a single instant? She did not know. But



burst through the smoke and bore her out of the inferno."

neither did she move from the summit of the "hill."

And it was while she sat there, her hair streaming in the wind, her eyes transfixed on space, that the miracle happened, though in reality it was no miracle, but the most natural occurrence in the world. A gust caught the embers of the camp fire and scattered them wide. Olive did not see it. All she saw was a light on

the beach. For a moment she stared at it spellbound, incredulous, the next she had sped down the slope with a warning cry and was trampling on a serpent of fire that writhed ahead of her through the tangle of brush, always ahead, always just beyond reach.

How long the battle lasted she had no notion, but this she knew—that it was Bob, Bob himself, who first cried a halt. Sweating,

begrimed, he burst through the smoke and bore her out of the inferno.

"Olive," he kept muttering, "Olive!"
Tahao was a semicircle of leaping flame.
He took her to the "hill," and together
they watched it burn itself out.

"There's nothing to be done," he said, "nothing. This is the end."

And he spoke truth.

He left with his wife by the schooner, and has long since ceased to be the Inevitable Ingram.



COUNTRY POSIES.

WILL you buy, will you buy
Something pretty from the sky,
Something blowing from a hedge,
Something from the spinney's edge,
Something stolen from the plough,
Sweetness broken from a bough,
Blooms in plenty, sweet and shy,
Will you buy, will you buy?

Can you pass, can you pass
Something whispering of the grass,
Something secret of a tree,
Something neighboured by a bee,
Something sheltered by a stone,
She-that-blooms-all-lie-alone?
Bonny lady, bonny lass,
Can you pass, can you pass?

Will you buy, will you buy
Something pleasing for the eye,
Something tinted and lovelorn,
Something gay against a thorn,
Something puckish for your jest,
Something nodding for your breast,
Country pleasure, country sigh:
Will you buy, will you buy?

THE KING FROM THE SOUTH

By EDGAR WALLACE

Author of "Sanders of the River," "The People of the River," "Bones," "The Keepers of the King's Peace," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN, A.R.A.

NE day Sanders called to him all captains of districts - Masters of Hills they were termed, because the sections of Rimi-Rimi stood upon hillsand the captains of districts, who were never consulted except when a question of taxation was in dispute, came importantly: for they were not warriors, but stout little chiefs, who had never been consulted within the memory of man. And when they were all together in the great space before the king's hut, the Masters of Hills and their drummers and their keepers of grain and the like, Sanders addressed them.

"Chiefs," he said, "you are wise men, who know the strength and the cunning of all your people, and I wish that you would

serve me."
"O ko," said one fat chief, "this white man wishes us to give him something."

Sanders heard the interruption, but

diplomatically ignored it.

"From each of the twelve districts of Rimi-Rimi you shall send me the best makers of huts and weavers of straw and thatchers of roof, and you shall each contribute the straw and the wood I desire, for I am going to build a great palace house in this space, and here I and the king I make shall sit down and give laws so that all may live comfortably."

"Lord," said one of the deputation in dismay, "we heard you were not staying

with us, and our hearts were glad."
"I am staying with you," said Sanders, without a smile, "and if your hearts are not glad, your backs will be sore."

In two hours they had sent to him the best of their artisans, and Sanders, with the top of his walking-stick, drew a plan upon

the ground.

"And where I put a leaf, you shall make a door," he directed them, "and where I lay a bamboo stick, you shall make me a fine window."

All the builders and the architects and the weavers of straw consulted with one

another, and one came to Sanders.

"Lord, we cannot do this," he said, " because, if we make you a house, you will stay with us. Therefore my friends and my brothers have said: 'We will not make this house, but go back to our homes."

"Take this, man," said Sanders, and handed him a long, light bamboo pole. "Now stand here"—he indicated a spot— "and hold the pole straight above your

head."

The man did as he was bid.

"And here you shall stand," said Sanders, " and to-night I will spread a cloth over the pole, and I will speak under it. If you let your hands bend, or do not stand still, my soldiers will beat you until you are sick."
"Lord," said the man, "I think it would

be easier to build your house."
"So I think," said Sanders. And here and

there ended all labour unrest.

Sanders was in some difficulty. Three times had he endeavoured to find a king for this wayward people, and once or twice a king had discovered himself, with disastrous consequences. The people were quiet, accepted his judgments without question, and even sent from Tofolaka and Bubuiala (the most turbulent tribes of the kingdom) requests for a judgment in a matter upon which the local chiefs did not agree,

15 1

Now he was to hold his first judgment palaver, an event of some importance. Before the king's hut three chairs had been placed, and already a crowd of litigants and curious spectators were squatting in a half-circle about them. Bones and Hamilton, resplendent in their new uniforms, came ashore for the great talk, and Sanders met them on the beach, for he was particularly anxious to see Bones.

In some respects Sanders had an extraordinary faith in his subordinate. Captain Tibbetts was erratic, his judgments erred at times on the side of wildness, but there could be no question of his native shrewdness, and time and time again Sanders had been pleasantly struck by the amazing sanity of Bones's point of view.

And late on the previous night he had handed to Bones a chip of wood inscribed with certain devil marks that had come to him in a most surprising manner in the hut of one Mofolobo, recently deceased, having died very quickly for his many crimes.

On that chip of wood had been written a message, and that message was from Diana Ferguson, who, four years before, had disappeared and, as it was believed, had died, following the destruction of her father's mission house by the Great King's orders.

"Well, Bones?" he asked anxiously. Bones shook his head. "It's a jolly old mystery to me, Excellency," he said.

He carried the wood wrapped in a handkerchief, and this he undid carefully. Sanders took the wood. It had been burnt on Mofolobo's fire, and only certain letters were visible.

..NDE..

...AVE YOUAN OF LIMBI MIT.

SA.RI..... DAY OF LOOKING.

"Of course, sir, it's addressed to you," said Bones. "The first word is 'Sanders,' then there's a space where a word or two has been burnt out. This is my construction of it."

Bones took a paper from his pocket and read:

"To Sanders. I am Diana Ferguson, and I am in terrible danger. Have you seen or heard of the Old Woman of Limbi? I am to be admitted to sacrifice on the Day of Looking."

Sanders took the slip from his hand.

"There's something in that," he said, "and I should say that the 'sa.ri.' stands for sacrifice. We may get something out of

this palaver. Has Kufusa returned?" he asked Hamilton.

"No, sir," replied Hamilton.

"Is that the man you sent to the Old Woman's camp?"

Sanders nodded. "I was not without anxiety to discover the day I am to be executed," he said drily, for he had the marks of one reserved by the Old Woman for slaughter.

He led the way back to the palaver place, and found the crowd at his feet. There were many there who had genuine grievances for discussion. There were not a few who came to test the genius and tolerance of their new lord, and hardly had the three men seated themselves when one, who was known through the five territories for the excellence of his riddles, stood up.

"Lord," he said, "it is said that you are very wise in your head, and I have come to ask you this. Once in the Old King's garden were nine trees, and on each tree there were nine pineapples. Now, a monkey

came to each "

It was a variant of the ancient herring and a half problem which has puzzled many children.

"O man," said Sanders, "it seems that you think this is a marriage feast, where the asker of riddles puts cunning questions to the foolish. Take this man, Abiboo, and lay him out."

They strapped the puzzler to the ground,

and he howled dismally.

"There were so many monkeys," said Sanders, and signalled the sergeant of Houssas, who had turned back his cuffs and was whistling a stout cane. "Nine," said Sanders when the last stroke of the rattan fell. "Tell me, O man, do I speak truth?"

"Lord, you speak truth," said the rueful purveyor of clever sayings. "Now, the last time I asked this riddle I spoke of three monkeys, but I said nine to your lordship,

that it should be harder."

"It was harder for you," said Sanders. "And harder yet for him who follows, unless he makes a man's palaver."

There were four or five other clever ones in the crowd, but they did not ask questions.

Then came a flood of genuine grievances, and Sanders listened patiently and judged with extraordinary swiftness — extraordinary, indeed, to the men who were used to day-long palavers, for the Administrator cut short many flights of eloquence, and came quickly to the point and to his decision.

Sanders was relieved when the palaver was ended. He was restless and a little irritable. Hamilton, who knew him and loved him, saw the signs, but made no attempt to discover his mind. He walked alone to one of the suburbs, and Hamilton did not follow him, knowing that at such moments Sanders preferred solitude and his own thoughts.

"Do you know what I think?" said Bones, who, too, was watching his chief with

a troubled face.

"I don't know, and have never known," said Hamilton, relieved to find a target for

his own irritability.

"One of these days, dear old Major," said Bones soberly, "you'll wake up, dear old thing, and find that I've got a head. And you'll be a bit surprised, jolly old sceptic."

"You never spoke a truer word than that, Bones," said Hamilton. "But what was it that you were thinking?"

"I was thinking that this young Diana business is getting on sad old Excellency's nerves. Here's the point I want to make." He tapped Hamilton's chest with his finger. "When the Fergusons were chopped by the naughty Old King-may he roast in hell!" he added in Arabic-"Sanders, from what I've heard, was up in the Ochori."

"Yes," said Hamilton, after a moment's

pause, "I think he was."

"Isn't it likely," said Bones, "that she heard Sanders was there, wrote the message, and sent it off by some faithful old aborigine before she was captured and killed?"

Hamilton was silent. "You mean that

this message is years old?"
Bones nodded. "Why not?" he de-

manded quietly.

"That is a view, of course, which is quite feasible," said Hamilton. "But Sanders is convinced that the girl is in this country now."

Bones shook his head. In moments such as these, all that was flippant in Bones's nature seemed to evaporate and leave a very calm, practical man, though his mannerisms of speech remained.

"Only one man could have told us," he said quietly, "and that was naughty old Mofolobo, and our impetuous Excellency shot him."

"It is an idea," said Hamilton. "I'll put

the idea to Sanders."

"Don't say it's my idea unless it's right," said Bones calmly. "If it turns out that my view is correct, I'll mention the fact, dear old thing."

"I've no doubt you will," said Hamilton.

"Bones is going back to the ship," he explained, when Sanders came up, watching the lanky, striding figure swinging towards

"Do you feel like a six-mile walk before tiffin?" asked Sanders abruptly. He had come back accompanied by a man whom he had requisitioned in the course of his wanderings, and when Hamilton assented: "I'm going out to the place where the Fergusons had their home. I've intended going there ever since I arrived in the city. This man knows the place." He indicated the native walking ahead of them.

wondered whether you intended going," said Hamilton. "It occurred to me that there would be likely clues in the place of those unfortunate people. Naturally the folks who chopped them would loot their house and, I suppose, would burn it, but it would be very unusual if they came back to

the place after the first day.'

It was as Hamilton had said, for in all the native territories are the dead invested with special qualities, so that even the house of a common man is sacred, and is allowed to rot under the rains and the storms until it collapses and is hidden from view

by the growing jungle.

The way carried them out to the north of the village, across a bare plain which looked like an elephants' playing-ground, but was, explained Sanders, the old campingground of the king's guard; and after an hour's tramp they came to the crest of a gentle ridge, and here they halted. away to the north was an unbroken stretch of forest land, above which, in the distance, rose one gaunt, grey hill. Sanders gazed on this long and earnestly.

"That is Mount Limpisi," he said, "the home of that ancient lady who will one day-" He did not finish his sentence, but Hamilton guessed just what fate was in store for the Devil Woman of Limbi.

It was a sombre, desolate hill; not even distance nor the softening qualities of the heat haze in which it shimmered detracted from its unloveliness. They resumed their walk, following a clearly defined track which meandered through a wood of stunted trees

resembling the juniper.
On the way Sanders was unusually com-

municative.

"I'm a little worried about supplies," he said—"I mean munition supplies. I hoped to get the country settled without anything like a war, but that now seems impossible.

We must open up communication with the old territory through the Ochori, and as soon as I've got this infernal king palaver settled, I intend setting up posts on the mountain road. There is only one road out, unfortunately."

"I know," said Hamilton, "and it leads through the Tofolaka country," he added

significantly.

Sanders said nothing, but he shared Hamilton's misgivings. The Tofolaka were the most turbulent of the Old King's tribe, and had been ominously quiescent. But even more ominous was the fact that the chief of the Tofolaka people had sent no embassy to the city. Moreover, there were stories, which had come through Sanders's spies, of war palavers throughout the country.

"The Tofolaka cannot wait," said Sanders, answering Hamilton's unspoken thought. "The question of securing the path is one

we must take in hand haec dum.

The path which they were following was curving now to the river, and they caught glimpses of a broad stream between breaks in the wood. Suddenly the guide stopped

and pointed.

"Lord, it was here," he said, and Sanders stared, for there was no sign of house or even a clearing. The elephant grass formed a thick belt to the water's edge, and sturdy little trees made a plantation which seemed to have existed for years.

Sanders walked slowly into the grass and began poking around with his stick. "Yes," he said, "here is the place"—and

pointed to a rotting roof-tree.

He followed its direction, and came to a crumbled heap of native bricks overgrown with weeds. Then he took off his coat, and the native drew a long-bladed chopper from the sheath at his waist and handed it to the white man. As for him, he would not touch or help, being, as he explained frankly, fearful of ghosts.

The two men worked for an hour. The sun was hot and the work was heavy. Before they had been at their task very long, both men had stripped off their shirts

and were working bare to the waist.

They found a trace of furniture—a battered kettle, a mouldy book, and bits of china plate which had been overlooked by the looters. Sanders knew the ways of the missionaries, and began digging by the side of the heap of bricks where he knew the fireplace had been, and presently he was rewarded.

The find was not a very important one: it was a rusty tin cash-box, the lid of which he wrenched off without effort. Inside were a large number of papers, most of which were undecipherable, and which were evidently correspondence relating to the mission.

At the bottom of the box were three English banknotes for five pounds and three photographs, one of which was evidently a group. Here the moisture had played havoc with the picture. The other he recognised as a portrait of Mrs. Ferguson, and the third, which was practically untouched by the action of the soil, was a full-length cabinet picture of a girl in short frocks.

Sanders looked at the photograph thoughtfully. The child was pretty, and he guessed, by the mop of golden hair, that this was the "little woman with hair like corn" about whom he had heard.

"Pretty child," he said laconically, and

handed the photograph to Hamilton.

Hamilton gazed at the picture fascinated, for the beauty of this girl budding into womanhood was undeniable, and even an amateur photograph, as it apparently was, could not coarsen her ethereal loveliness. He gave the photograph back to Sanders with a sigh. They dug a little more, without, however, discovering anything that would help toward a solution of the girl's fate, and, slipping the photograph and the papers into his jacket pocket, Sanders re-dressed himself. On the way back Hamilton put forward Bones's theory, and Sanders was obviously impressed.

"There is that possibility, of course," he said. "It's perfectly true, as Bones said, that I was in the Ochori at that time, and possibly the missionaries may have known that I was, comparatively speaking, close at hand. But it seems to me that the writing is fresh. When I touched one of the letters, the charcoal came off on my fingers."

"It may have been taken into a hut and preserved by a native as a ju-ju," suggested

Hamilton.

Sanders did not reply. They were nearing the village before he broke his long silence.

"Hamilton," he said, "we have a pretty stiff task in front of us, and if the Old Woman is as powerful as we think she is, and if the markings which have been put upon my forehead mean anything, I want you to understand that you are to take my place as leader of this expedition."

Hamilton looked at him startled. "You don't think for one moment, sir, that the

Devil Woman of Limbi really will kill

Sanders laughed shortly. "I don't know," he said, "but I do not rule out any possibility."

"But you cannot seriously think-"

"I think so seriously," said Sanders, "that I sent Kufusa to discover from the Old Woman and her guards just when this interesting event is likely to occur. And that is why the absence of Kufusa is worrying me a little."

As they came into the place before the king's hut, they saw that something unusual had occurred. There was a party of armed strangers waiting by the door of the hut, and around them, at a respectful distance, was a fringe of awe-stricken townsmen. Sanders pushed his way through the people, and at sight of him the leader of the strangers stiffened. There was no need to ask who he was. The clay-plastered hair, the oily body, and the silvery spear in his hand told his calling; the girdle of halftails and the broad-bladed elephant sword by his side his rank.

"O captain of soldiers," said Sanders, walking toward him, "why do you come to

my hut with spears?"

"Man," said the warrior, "I am of the Limbi regiment of the king's guard, and am a captain of a hundred men who sit down at the terrible door of the Old Woman's house."

He was carrying something wrapped up in a square of rough-woven native cloth, Sanders noticed, and whispered two words in English to Hamilton.

"So I see," said Sanders. "Now tell me why you come with your five men and stand so haughtily before me, I who am

lord of these lands."

"There is a greater lord, I think," said the man insolently, "and we who serve her say this—that you shall not send your spies into our land, asking evil questions about the Holy One, the Woman of Limbi, and, if you do, behold!"

He let one corner of the cloth fall, and there rolled upon the ground at his feet a head. It was the head of Kufusa, the man Sanders had sent to the Old Woman's

country.

"Him we found," said the chieftain, unconcerned, "and burnt him till he spoke, saying that you had sent him. Afterwards we cut off his head."

"This also I see," said Sanders again. "O man, what do they call you in this land?"

"I am a captain of a hundred men," said the big chief proudly, "and I am very terrible in war, having slain all these." He ran his forefinger swiftly down a long line of nicks on his spear, and Sanders made a little grimace.

Until that moment he had not realised the extraordinary power which the Old Woman wielded. That she could send armed men with this insolence to him testified to the faith which these warriors had in the potency of her name. For now the captain of a hundred men was preparing to take his departure, having, as he thought, fulfilled the dignified service which carried no evil consequences to himself.

"Put down your spears, men," said Sanders softly, "for these two little guns which are in my hand are spiteful and quick as the lightning from M'shimba M'shamba, as also are those which are in my lord's

hands by my side."

"I have heard of these little guns," said the chief, as he dropped his spear, an example which his fellows followed. "Now tell me why you do this terrible thing, for I am the Old Woman's messenger, and none dare stop me in my proud way."

The Houssas of the guard—Sanders had left six at the hut—came out and tied the

six men scientifically.

"I also have a proud way," said Sanders.

"As to you, friend, your way is the top of a tree where I hanged a great chief, and there you die this day, that all men shall see that the messengers of my pleasure are more sacred than captains of a hundred. And where you hang, man—and listen to this, you soldiers, who will not hang, for you shall go back to the Old Woman with this message—one day upon that same tree I will take the Devil of Limbi, be she man, woman, or ghost, be she the own child of M'shimba, and there she shall hang, by Ewa!"

The Old King's war-drums rolled that afternoon, and before the assembled city of Rimi-Rimi the swaying body of the captain of a hundred was hauled aloft for all men to see. And there it hung till sunset, when they let him down and took him to the middle islands in a canoe and buried him with proper rites.

II.

"I THINK the Zaire is safer," said Sanders, and later in the day they shifted their belongings to a cooler and certainly more convenient lodging.

The question of the "devil mark" was one which held the interest of Bones.

"It's a curious thing nobody wants to mark me, dear old Excellency," said Bones.

"Even the Devil Woman jibs at you, Bones," said Hamilton, prodding some

pickles.

"In re Devil Lady," said Bones, "I'll tell you a weird discovery I've made. It's a funny thing about me, dear old Excellency," he said, "but I always seem to get hold of some dinky little bit of information that other and so-called superior brains—not casting any reflection upon your jolly old cranium, Excellency, but facts are facts—manage to miss."

"There are many queer things about this country," said Sanders, "and your perspicuity, Bones, is not the least queer of

them."

Bones bowed.

"That wasn't intended as a compliment at all," explained Hamilton, and Bones bowed again.

"Well, what is it, Bones?" asked

Sanders.

"Well, this is the queer thing," said Bones impressively, "and, mind you, when I say a thing's queer, it is queer. I'm one of those people with what you might describe as a normal mind."

"You might describe it so," said Hamilton, the temptation being irresistible, "but

it is extremely unlikely."

"Go on, Bones," said Sanders, with a smile.

"In this strange an' unpleasant land," said Bones, "there are no witch-doctors."

The two men looked at one another.

"That is queer," said Sanders, "and, what's more, it's true. I haven't heard of a witch-doctor palaver or met one of the gentlemen since I've been in the country."

"In every other territory with which I've been acquainted in a career arduous and marked, as it were," Bones rhapsodised, "by adventures ashore and afloat, and charac-

terised-"

"Don't let us have a history of your life, Bones, for Heaven's sake!" snapped Hamilton. "You're trying to say that you've never found a country without witch-doctors. Well, you only know one, and that's the old territory."

"It certainly is strange," said Sanders thoughtfully, "and I should imagine that is the secret of the Old Woman's power. She is all the witch-doctors in the country

wrapped up in one, and has concentrated in her hands all their authority and power."

There was a man whom he kept a prisoner at large, a petty chief who had served at the Old King's court, and he sent for him from

his comfortable quarters below.

"It is true, lord," said the man, "there are no witch-doctors in this land. And once, when a certain man named Gigini set himself up to do magical things, the Old King sent for him because the Woman of Limbi"—he shivered; all natives shivered at the mention of her name—"was very jealous of such doings. And the Old King put a sharp little snake in his mouth and sewed up his lips."

"Cheery little fellow!" murmured Bones.
"What happens when the Old Woman

dies?" asked Sanders.

"Lord," was the surprising and crushing retort, "the Old Woman has never died

yet."

The palaver would have ended there, but this prisoner, being a courtier, must needs ask a question which Sanders had asked himself a hundred times in the past twentyfour hours.

"Lord," he said, "how will you find a

king?"

"Who knows, man?" said Sanders, being sure himself that he did not know, though he was on the verge of knowing, a thought of his having taken such shape that a decision was near. "I have marked as king the chief of the Tofolaka people, who is by all accounts a warrior and the brother of the Old King's wife. Also M'seru, who is in that relationship; but M'seru is a feeble man and very sick, and, moreover, he has been corrupted by living so long in the Bad Village."

"Lord," said the man, "if you take the chief of the Tofolaka, then I tell you you will have war. For the Fongini hate the Tofolaka, who have done many cruel things to them, and it is a saying in these parts that the snake and the Tofolaka live in the grass, and the snake dies of shame. Also for years we people of Rimi-Rimi have feared the Tofolaka because it was prophesied that some day a king would come

from the south."

"They have set up a new chief of the Bubujala," said Sanders, to whom the legend was new, and the man spat.

"The Bubujala are great thieves," he said, "also they chop and eat men, which we people of Rimi-Rimi have never done. Now, how can you take one of such a



"And the paralysed Lobi, watching in a frightened terror, did not see Bosambo's hand move, and lo! there was M'ndi, the chief, sprawling on his back in the road, and his hands beating feebly."

shameful race and put as king above us, the proud people of Rimi-Rimi?"

"O man," said Sanders sarcastically, "what cause for pride have you in Rimi-Rimi?"

"Lord, we are proud that we are not as other people," said this heathen Pharisee.

Now, this discussion on the dearth of witch-doctors in the land came at an opportune moment, though this Sanders could not know. For down in Tofolaka a man had come boldly forth as a curer of the dead. Perhaps he had practised his arts secretly during the Old King's lifetime, for there was some report of his having raised a very dead man cala cala (which means long ago), but at the time he ascribed this achievement to the virtues of the Old Woman of Limbi, and it was said that he had whispered her dreadful name in his ear, and that the deceased had thereupon sneezed and sat up, asking for food.

And when the Old King died, he went before the chief of his village—who was his half-brother—and very boldly he asserted, in a long and flowery oration, that all future miracles would be performed without assistance, and that he had no connection with any other business, so to speak.

The Old King was dead, and there was no authority in the land save that which was exercised with such disconcerting violence by three strange white men who had come into the country, purporting to be the servants of a league, the native name for which being Many-who-speak-as-one, so this man was allowed to practise his arts.

There was a Pope in Rome and a Pope in Avignon, who exercised each his authority and seemed to get along very well, and although it is unlikely that this historical precedent was in the mind of Lobi N'kema, it was certain that for the moment he offered no rivalry to the Old Woman of Limbi, but rather spoke of her as his "sister," and hinted that he had received his inspiration from a source of wisdom which was common to the two. Also he claimed that in the dark hours of the night the Old Woman came to him—having made herself so small that she could be carried on the breast of a bat and these two would talk together affably, as devil to devil, without pride or conceit.

Then he gave up his wives and returned to a small cave in the neighbourhood of his village—a piece of shameless plagiarism, but impressive. He demanded a guard of women, but this was denied to him for the true being. Nor was he allowed to remain

undisturbed in his sanctuary, for when the chief, his brother, died suddenly, or so appeared, lying stiff and motionless with closed eyes, they sent for Lobi the Monkey, and he came. He laid his hand on the heart of his "dead" brother and blew into his nostrils, and his brother woke and was exceedingly well.

There were many sceptics who would have preferred to have seen the experiments tried upon one who was not so closely related to the doctor, and others—these being refused admission by the woman of the brother's house when they came to make sure that he was dead—who spoke contemptuous words; and the leader of the opposition was cursed by Lobi in the most public manner. The next morning he was found in his hut with his throat cut, so that the curse seemed to have had some potency.

Then Lobi came into greater prominence, for the paramount chief of the Tofolaka sent word to all his people, and to his chiefs and headmen and high hunters and masters of land, that they should hold palavers touching the matter of the Old King and his successor, and it was a term of reference that they should decide upon his successor, choosing "the highest and greatest chief of all the world, one who loved his people and his country, and was skilled in war and hated

white men."

This description so accurately fitted the chief of the Tofolaka people that at a thousand palaver fires he was acclaimed as the only possible candidate for the office. To him in his great city came Lobi with strings of teeth about his neck and a necklace of little bones.

"I have heard of you, Lobi," said the chief, "and it seems to me that when I sit in Rimi-Rimi, and the Old Woman makes palaver with me because of your shameful pretensions, I must hand you to the skinners."

Lobi turned grey, but put on a bold face. "Lord," he said, "last night I spoke to the spirit of the Old Woman, who is my friend. And she came to me under the wing of a bat, and she had made herself so small that she could sit upon my finger." And he held out his finger in proof, and the chief was uneasy. "And, lord," Lobi went on, "I spoke to her, saying: 'Sister-devil'—for we are brother and sister, lord—'Sister-devil, we will put M'ndi in the Old King's place, for he is the brother of the chief of the Tofolaka, who was cruelly slain by the white men and was himself marked for king.""

"O ko," said M'ndi, fascinated. "That was a great talk. What said the Old One?"

Lobi cleared his throat lest the chief detect his nervousness, and knowing that his life depended upon the way in which M'ndi would take his next invention.

"Lord, she said that M'ndi was no king for her," he stated, breathless in spite of himself, and the chief's brows met.

"Death!" he said. "That is a bad talk."

"So I said, lord," said Lobi. "'Woman, said I, 'go back to your bat and to your great cave, and do not come here again, for I tell you I, Lobi, great in magic and a raiser of dead men, as your lordship knows, will be M'ndi's friend!", "

The king was open-mouthed. "O Lobi," he said in a hushed voice, "you spoke to the

Old Woman thus and you live?

"I live, lord," said Lobi complacently. "For when the Old Woman threw lightning at me, I put up my shield, which was made for me by three blind ghosts, and the lightning turned to water and fell on the ground, and where it fell is a great hole, as I can show you, chief."

The chief thought a while. "Stay with me, Lobi," he said, "for I see that you are

greater than the Old Woman."

Now came Lobi's supreme moment.

"Lord, the Old Woman will die," he said loudly, "but I will never die, for I am immortal."

There was a silence.

Let curiosity, caprice, sheer lust of hurting, stir the chief; let but a flicker of doubt trouble his mind, and Lobi was a dead man. And he stood, his blood like ice, the fear of death upon him, till the chief spoke, and when he spoke Lobi knew, from the quiver in his voice, that he had

"You shall sleep in my hut this night,

Most Holy One," said the king.

Between M'ndi's city and the city of the Ochori is a distance of two hundred geographical miles. Between the two countries lies the impenetrable barrier of the Ghost Mountains, impenetrable save for the one narrow road which crosses its crest-a road which is no road for twenty miles on either side of the mountain, but a goat track which leads to a narrow, twisting ravine

In the city of the Ochori dwelt a chief who had settled the problem of witch-doctors to his own satisfaction many years before.

Bosambo of the Ochori was a foreigner to his people. He was, in fact, a Liberian Kroo boy who had escaped from a convict establishment in Monrovia, and, after walking hundreds of miles across a desolate and dangerous country, had sat down with the Ochori, the most timid tribe in all Africa, and had created a nation out of this unpromising material. And he had fought the warrior Akasava and the ruthless N'gombi and the cunning Isisi, and incidentally, from time to time, his own people; for when he filled their stomachs with food and their hearts with courage, they had turned against him, and he had fought great battles with his northern people before he had crushed their aspirations for separate government and had disposed of their leaders.

He was a good servant of Government, and faithful, though constitutionally dishonest in small matters. He had made one incursion into the Great King's country, and by the favour of Sanders he had returned with his life and the woman who was to him more than life. They called her Fitema, and she was of the true faith, having been named "Fatima," and this comely, brown Arab girl was the light of Bosambo's eyes.

She sat at the door of her hut, rocking her second son upon her knee and watching Bosambo, whose eyes were roaming the sky. The chief's hut was so placed, like all chief's huts, that it commanded a view of the main street of the Ochori, and from where she sat she could see the women busy at the fires, preparing the evening meal.

"Lord," she said softly, "there is no

sign of the little bird ? "

Bosambo shook his head and came back to her.

"All things are with God," he said in Coast Arabic, "and is it not written in the Sura of the Djin that that which is looked for is never boasted about?"

"Lord," she said gently, "I do not think

that is in the blessed Koran."

"Who knows?" said Bosambo vaguely. And then the thing he had been looking for for twenty days came. The woman saw it first, pointed, and Bosambo looked up. A bird was wheeling round above the village —a tired bird that planed lower and lower on outstretched wings. Bosambo pursed his lips and whistled. It was a shrill, unmusical whistle, but at the sound of it the pigeon dropped straight to his outstretched hand.

"O Kuku, little love," he chuckled, as he held the bird tenderly in his great paw, "now I did not think you would be the first to come, because you are so lazy. Bring food and water," he called in Bomongo, and he waited until these were brought, caressing the pigeon that lay in his hand with long, gentle strokes. They placed the seed and the water on the ground, and only then did Bosambo slip the two rubber bands from the bird's leg and unroll the thin paper they held in place.

He smoothed the paper and walked out from the shadow of the hut, and slowly spelt out the message, which was in Arabic,

and began:

"To the servant of God, Bosambo, Chief of the Ochori and Ranger of the Upper

Rivers, on your house peace."

Bosambo read and re-read until he knew the contents of the letter by heart; then he walked by himself, the woman watching him anxiously until the sun went down. Presently he returned to her.

"Mother of my children," he said, dropping his huge hand on her head, "Sandi has need of me and calls me to a great

palaver."

The woman licked her lips. "Do you go

-alone?" she asked.

"With ten spearsmen and no wife," said Bosambo. "And I am glad of this, my jewel, because the Old King's city has bad dreams."

"Go then, lord," she said, after a pause, " and I will hold the Ochori for you, for now all the races are at peace, and even the king of the Akasava has sent us presents,

because he loves Sandi."

Ten minutes later Bosambo's lokali was sending its staccato message, calling for the "Sunrise Chiefs," they being the chiefs who, by starting immediately from their several homes, could reach the Ochori city by sun-In the morning Bosambo held his palaver, and his words were few.

"I go into the Old King's country by the mountains," he said, "and my woman Fitema sits in my place, and has the life of the highest men in her hand. For behind

me, in this palaver, is Sandi."

"Bosambo," said one of the assembly, "why do you send for us to tell this? For who knows whether you walk in or walk out of this land in these peaceful days, save at the tax times, when we all know that you are here?"

There was a smothered laugh at this, and when headmen laugh at their taxation the process of government is running very

smoothly.

"I say this for my people and my village," the little chief continued, "that I am Fitema's man, and my shield is for her. For, Bosambo, your woman is a good one." After this the palaver developed into a complimentary exchange of views. In the night, when Bosambo was well on his way, the lokali of the Ochori city, which was a hollow tree-trunk of extraordinary thinness, beat out a long message, and the villages of the north took it up and sent it along, and even the drummers of Tofolaka repeated the message - though they did not understand it—in case it might be sent by one of the spirits that live in the Ghost Mountains.

The drummer of M'ndi heard, and brought his interpretation to his master, who was sitting at council with seven wise men.

"Lord, there is a long-long call, and it comes from the mountain, and by my cunning I understand it, though the rolls of the Ochori are strange and foreign."

"What does it say?" asked Mindi.

"Lord, it says: 'I come. Make ready.'"
That is a sign," said Lobi, who was one of the council. "For this lokali has been beaten by spirits. And I do not doubt that the splendid ghosts of whom I spoke, and who are well known to me, are with you in your enterprise; for all men know that beyond the mountains there is nothing but the end of the world and a few common herds of people."

The chief fingered the hair of his chin in a reflective but not unpleasant frame of

"It has been said in this land, ever since the world began, that some day there would come a great king from the south," he said. He did not use the word "south," but an idiom which means "On the left hand of the setting sun." "Now, if your words are true, Lobi, then it is true that I am the man, for there is no country nearer the mountains than Tofolaka."

And then a great inspiration came to Lobi. "Lord," he said, "lest any wicked man should rise and say, 'I am the true king, for my village is farther south than the city of M'ndi,' we will make a journey into the mountains, and I myself will talk with the ghosts for you."

The chief M'ndi was perturbed. "O ko, I do not love ghosts," he said, with a distasteful grimace. "How can I look upon them and not go blind? Now, you know these beautiful people. Therefore you shall go up, and I will sit at the foot of the mountain, and you shall carry their word to me. Besides," he added, and this was to the point, "I am too fat a man to climb

They set forth in the dawn, the king and his counsellors and two regiments of a thousand spears. On the third day they sat down in a village to consider the pressing problem of supplies, for the country could not support the two thousand spears, as the agitated chiefs for miles around testified; and since M'ndi did not wish to begin by plundering the granaries, he sent back all his soldiers save two score.

It was not until the fifth day that they came to the foot-hills of the mountain, for M'ndi had tarried in a village. high ridges of the mountain were shrouded under clouds, a certain sign that the spirits were present in great strength and desired privacy. It was not a propitious moment, the witch-doctor explained, to make his call, but the next day, the clouds having disappeared, the camp was shifted to half-way up the mountain side.

And then M'ndi, reflecting all one night as to whether his interests were wholly safe in the hands of a man who had been comparatively unknown to him a few weeks

before, made a decision.

Might not this companion and associate of devils utilise the interview for his own advantage? And was it certain that Lobi

would tell him all that happened?
"I will come with you," he said, "even to the very edge of this devil's land. For in the days of the Old King we went against the Ochori by this road, and none of us took hurt from the ghosts."

"Lord, you are wiser than most," said his companion seer, "and it will be good for you in the days to come. For who shall have gone nearer to the edge of the kingdom

than you, M'ndi?"

They left their warriors alone at dawn and climbed the steep track. The going was rough and tiring until they came to the S-shaped ravine at the very crescent of the mountain.

"I see no ghosts," said M'ndi.

The two men were alone, for M'ndi's disrespectful attitude towards ghosts was not shared by his counsellors or his soldiers.

"Lord, they are invisible," said Lobi, yet in my wonderful eyes I see many. Look, lord, there is one—a very old ghost who is walking across the road."

"I see nothing," said M'ndi in truth. "O

ko, Lobi, now I know that you have the

true magic."

"And there," said the imaginative Lobi, pointing, "is the ghost of the Old King himself, and he has put up his hand with great joy at seeing you."

M'ndi saw nothing. He stared expressively along the road, up and down the steep sides of the canon, and finally at Lobi. That wise man had gained confidence in himself at an amazing rate.

"Now I will speak with them," he said, and addressed someone who was quite

invisible to the chief.

"O ghost," said Lobi, "I see you."

He paused and listened as though for a

"Lord chief," he said, "this ghost wishes

you well."

"I hear nothing," said the puzzled M'ndi. "That is because you do not understand

their magical words," said Lobi.

"O ghosts and devils"—he raised his voice and threw out his hands to the mountains, and M'ndi, the chief, began to shiver violently, for his courage was oozing away —" see me, Lobi, your servant and friend, also M'ndi, who loves you."

He bent his head again, listening, and great beads of sweat were rolling down

M'ndi's face.

"Lord," said Lobi, "this they say: 'O king from the south, I see you!","

``I see you!"Lobi leapt round with a squeal of fright, for neither M'ndi nor spirit had spoken. In the centre of the roadway was a tall man, his broad shield on his left shoulder, his right hand twirling a stabbing-spear with such rapidity that it seemed a blurred wheel.

"I see you," said the intruder again.

"Who are you, man, who dare stand in this holy place?" asked Lobi.

"I am he of whom you spoke—Bosambo from the south, and king of all these lands and people."

Deep and loud was Bosambo's voice, and the straight cliff caught his words and sent

them back in rolling echoes.

"Sleep!" roared M'ndi, first to recover, and sent his spear flying in Bosambo's direction.

An almost imperceptible tilt of his shield, and the spear flew off at a tangent.

"Oman, whoever you are," said Bosambo, " and I think you are a chief, now you shall discover all about ghosts."

And the paralysed Lobi, watching in a

frightened terror, did not see Bosambo's hand move, and lo! there was M'ndi, the chief, sprawling on his back in the road, and his hands beating feebly.

"What man was this?" asked Bosambo.

"Lord," said the shaking Lobi, "he was
the chief of the Tofolaka, and by accounts
doomed to be king of all this land."

"It was a good day when I met him," said Bosambo, and looked at Lobi curiously. "By certain signs of devil masks and such offal as you have about your neck," he said, "I see you are a great witch-doctor."

"Lord, I am what I am," said Lobi

uncomfortably.

"How many did you bring with you—you and this dead king—and where do they wait?"

" They wait at the bottom of the road, and

there are four times twenty spears."

He looked about him helplessly, and for the first time he saw perched on boulders, and sitting on the ground and everywhere save on the road, ten men of the Ochori, and they were heavily armed.

"That is good," said Bosambo, and spoke to his followers, giving them certain instructions. "Now you shall come with me, Lobi, the witch-doctor, and you shall do as I say, and if you do otherwise, I shall break your neck."

They went down the road together and presently issued from the neck of the ravine.

"Lord, when we turn this corner," said the man, "we shall see the fine soldiers of M'ndi."

"Then we shall not turn the corner," said Bosambo. "Now, man, you shall do this. Whilst I lie in the grass behind this rock, you shall go no farther than I can reach you with three spears' length, so that I may kill you if you make me look foolish, and you shall call up ten of the men and say to them: 'Lay down your arms and go up to the Holy Place where M'ndi is.' Go."

Lobi did as he was bid, calling out in the middle of the road, and ten men came up, packed their spears and went up to the ravine. Presently from the top of the path sounded a low whistle, and Bosambo said:

"Now, Lobi, you shall say to another ten what you said to the first."

And so, ten by ten, they went up into the ravine, leaving their spears and their swords, their wicker shields and fine knives by the side of the road; and each party surrendered without noise, and two of Bosambo's guard took the prisoners back to the Ochori village to the south of the mountain, where Bosambo had left a regiment of a thousand spears in case of accidents. And of this thousand, eighty came back without arms and, collecting the spears and the shields and the swords and the sharp little knives which the soldiers of M'ndi had left by the wayside, they arrayed themselves in two lines under Bosambo's approving eyes.

"Sent for Bosambo?" said Hamilton incredulously. "Good Heavens!"

"Why good Heavens?" asked Sanders quietly. "There is in reality very little racial difference between the Ochori and the people of this territory."

"Jolly old Bosambo!" murmured Bones.
"Why, dash it all, Excellency, he is the king from the south that these naughty old

people have been talking about."

"I thought of that, too," nodded Sanders; "but mainly I have sent for Bosambo because we are going to have trouble, anyway, and it had better be about a king I can trust."

"But how is he going to get here?" asked Hamilton. "He can't come by way of the river, and if he comes by the mountain path he has got to cross through the Tofolaka country, and the Tofolaka are ready for war, and by all accounts M'ndi, their chief, is a pretty hefty fellow."

"He'll come," said Sanders.

He had hardly spoken the words before three canoes swept into view around the point which is made by the out-jutting base of one of the seven hills. And in the centre, beneath a grass canopy, was a large man, and on his head was an opera hat set at a rakish angle, and in his hat was a large

" Jolly old Bosambo, I think," said Bones.

POOR CHANNING

By M. L. C. PICKTHALL

ILLUSTRATED BY SYDNEY SEYMOUR LUCAS

THE door of the bedroom on the right of the sitting-room opened noiselessly and the young doctor came out. Channing did not move otherwise than that his eyes, which had been staring at the door, now centred on the doctor's face. The doctor, meeting that gaze, felt a mist in his own eyes. He crossed the room quickly to Channing. "For Heaven's sake, man," he said roughly, "go and get some rest!" Channing said: "Has he spoken yet?"

"No. And he's not likely to for hours." Channing's look went past the doctor and again settled on the door, which had been closed softly from within. "I'll wait," he said dully; "I—want to be there when he—speaks."

"You shall be there, Channing. They

will call you before they call me. And it

can't come for hours."

A gleam passed across the stony face turned to the door. It might have been distrust. . . . Channing whispered: "You

can't be sure. He might . . . ?

The doctor's hand dropped on Channing's shoulder. "If he wants you, my dear fellow," he said, "you shall be called. I promise you." He thrust Channing gently towards the door of the bedroom on the left. "Go and lie down," he commanded. "Owen won't want you yet."

It was not that which Channing had

meant.

He went slowly into his room. He left the door open, so that across the sittingroom they had shared he could see the door of the bedroom opposite, behind which Owen lay. He stretched himself on his own bed. Presently he shut his eyes. He lay as motionless as Owen, all his life concentrated in listening.

He had been listening all night for Owen's

voice.

The young doctor, leaving the sittingroom, met the day nurse coming in. gave her a few low-toned directions. Then her eyes went to the open door of Channing's room. "He's resting?" she asked softly.

"I got him to lie down at last. taking it hard. Poor Channing!"

"Poor Mr. Channing!" the nurse echoed

softly.

Channing heard them. A ghastly sort of laughter shook him as he lay. His stiff lips writhed. "Poor Channing!" he repeated to himself. "Poor Channing!"

Presently the night nurse left. was stillness. Even the ordinary noises of the hotel seemed softened, as if everyone —as if even the very walls themselves were waiting and listening for Owen to Channing lay rigid. He listened, not only with his ears, but as if the sense of hearing extended over his whole

There was no sound from behind Owen's door.

The stillness began to weigh on Channing. He panted beneath its pressure. sleep. He tried to fight it off. irresistible. He yielded to it in indescribable terror. He knew what he would see.

A moment, and he was looking again into the nameless, sunless cleft in the flanks of the Ronfluer.

It was a mere crack in the granite, a hundred feet deep, bridged by a felled tree. There were a score of such cracks, such bridges, within walk of the hotel. were nothing.

Yet it had happened there. Not on the crags of the Ronfleur nor the glaciers of the Kamaristiqui, but there, within sight of the hotel cottages and the tame bear on the terrace.

In his sleep Channing groaned. He was crossing the cleft on the log. Owen was just ahead. He saw Owen's arms flung out, felt the sickening roll of the great trunk under his feet. It was slipping from its sockets on the lip of the cleft. Then he was down, clinging to the log, and Owen was hanging by his hands.

A blackness enclosed the vision. He saw nothing but his friend's hands on the log.

It began to roll again; their combined

weight was too much for its disturbed balance. Their combined weight.

Channing started up. He thought he In reality he made no sound. "I did not touch his hands!" he thought he screamed. "I swear I didn't! He let

Shaking and trembling, Channing awoke. He found himself in the middle of the sitting-room, advancing towards Owen's door. He stood in a moment with his body pressed against it, his ear to the woodlistening. Had Owen spoken yet? When he did speak, what would he say?

Yes, that was it—what would he say?

Leaning against the door, Channing began to whisper noiselessly to Owen. "Don't say I did it!" he implored. "Don't tell them I did it! It's not true. I didn't do it. The—thought passed through my mind. It would have passed through any man's. I've so much to live for. I didn't translate it into action. I would be incapable of such a thing. Owen, I didn't touch your hands. You fell, Owen. just fell. I—I only thought it, Owen. Tell me—tell them—I only thought it, Owen!"

What was it Owen would tell them? There was a soft stir. The door opened. The day nurse was looking at him with utmost compassion. She said "Mr. Owen is still unconscious."

" I—I thought I heard him speak."

"He—will speak?"

"We think so, Mr. Channing. count on it. If the stupor holds over to-day, as the doctor told you, there is not much hope. But if he rouses and speaks sensibly, there is every hope, Mr. Channing—every hope. And we confidently expect that he will be conscious before night.

Channing realised that this kind young woman, with the sympathy dimming her eyes, was trying to comfort him, to give him hope. His face twisted. He was tortured with a new terror, an unspeakable dread lest he should come to hope that

Owen would never speak. . . . "Not that, O God!" breathed Channing. She must have heard him. She touched his hand, abashed before this man's love for his friend. "Come and look at him,' she said gently. "He's looking better."

She turned. Channing had to follow her into the silent, shadowed room where lay the friend whom he had—no, he had only

thought it.

The still body lying so long and quiet,

under the unstirred folds of sheet and blanket, grew on him out of the shadow. That was what he had made of Owen, was it—that rigid flesh in the bandages, as yet incapable even of suffering? But no! He could not have done it! Owen-had Owen seen the thought in his face and let Or had his hands slipped? patient the old man's mouth was in that faint, smiling repose, like the repose of death! Perhaps . . .

He bent nearer—nearer. He saw the sheet lift ever so little. Owen still lived. He thought the slightest tremor moved the He waited. Suppose Owen's eyes opened suddenly, while he stood there, and looked at him with bitterness, with con-Suppose Owen suddenly sat up, pointed with his strapped arm, spoke terribly: "Channing, why did you loosen my hands from the log?"

"I didn't! I didn't! My God, I only thought it! Surely I only thought it!"

The endless repetition of the mind, accusation and reply. Channing staggered a little. Better, perhaps, better if-

He writhed under the lashes of a scorn bitterer far than any Owen would have for him. His soft, well-sheltered soul was bared and bound under the scourges of that selfknowledge. He said aloud to Owen: "Pray God you'll live! Pray God you'll speak!" He meant it passionately. He turned without another word and went back to his own room. He lay face down on his bed, waiting for Owen to speak.

People came softly to the sitting-room and asked questions. Half the people in the place seemed to be friends of Owen's. As he had often wondered before, so now mechanically he wondered why. Owen was not particularly young, nor handsome, nor rich, nor clever. He was not particularly anything but—was it self-sacrificing? Was it self-forgetfulness that made Owen such a good friend?

The Bassetts were in the room now. Old Mrs. Bassett was crying. He heard the shaken and anxious murmur of Colonel Bassett's inquiries. He heard him say: "And poor Channing?" He could not catch the nurse's reply. He heard the old man say, as he went out, to his wife: "Passing the love of women, my dear—if it's possible to do that."

And he had pushed Owen from the $\log \cdot \cdot \cdot$ No! Never! It was only that the thought had crossed his brain, the animal part of his human consciousness. He had thought instinctively of self-preservation. That was it. Instinctively. A good word. His decent civilised physical being had never obeyed that thought.

Or had it?

Channing rolled from the bed as if in bodily pain. He fell on his knees beside it.

Poor Channing! "Your friend Channing is waiting to see you." And perhaps Owen would

"Then he was down, clinging to the log, and Owen was hanging by his hands."

That was instinctive, too. He had no religious beliefs, as he told anyone who cared to know. He hid his face. "I don't know," he groaned—"I don't know what I did in that last moment! But Owen knows. And when he speaks—the whole world will know." He lifted his head. He stared blankly at the wall. "I was afraid," he said, "afraid! I—had so much to live for."

Now, he knew, he had left himself nothing in the world to live for, whether Owen lived or died.

Kneeling by the bed, he waited.

He began to rehearse the scene when Owen would wake. What words would be his first? He could imagine a whiteheat of scorn in Owen, for all his gentleness. They would say to Owen:

> answer: "I've no friend of that name." Or perhaps he would say: "Bring him here." And they would bring Channing. And Owen would look at him and speak, and those words would set on Channing the brand of Cain.

Incredulous amazement possessed Channing that ever he could have held life so dear. He got up and went into the sittingroom again. He pulled a chair near Owen's door and sat in it, listening.

A hand touched his shoulder. He looked up. It was Mary

Amberley.

He noticed with particular care the dull blue travelling cloak she wore, and how against it 3the porcelain fairness of her skin showed almost transparent. The single lock of grey hair he loved gleamed in the rippled brown like silver. Then he looked into her understanding eyes.

He had loved her first for her understanding, which

seemed to him genius—a genius of sympathy. Now, looking at her, he knew that he had set himself outside her understanding for ever. He dropped his face in his hands and groaned.

She did not offer, nor seem to expect,

caresses. That was part of her divine gift that she should come to him now merely as

an embodied sympathy.

She said: "We have only just returned, and I have only just heard." Her look was upon him with exquisite gentleness. just wish to tell you I am sorry. Dear, I am sorry."

"Mary!" said Channing hoarsely.

"Yes. I know, Rob, I know." Her hand passed to his head-rested there. "I only want you to know that I'm here—when you want me, and thinking of you—and of him."

So in a few words she showed him that, though she loved him, she had strength to stand aside—that she would not press into his holy places of grief until he called her. Realising what he would lose when he lost her—when she knew—Channing shivered. With body, mind, and soul at that moment he desired her as never before.

He sat quite still, staring at Owen's door. "Has he spoken yet or showed conscious-

ness?"

"No," whispered Channing. "I'm wait-

ing—until—he does."

Just the breath of a kiss on his hair, the breath of words: "My poor boy!" Then he saw her moving softly from the

"Mary!" He cried it, shrieked it. She did not turn. It had been only his soul that cried. He pressed his shaking hand over his mouth. He must not call her. She was no longer his to call, though she did not know it-yet. She would when Owen spoke. If he called now, he could imagine the light of comfort on her dear face when she returned to him. He craved for it as a man in a desert might crave for water. It could never be his.

He imagined the look on her face when

Owen spoke.

"Mary," whispered Channing, "Mary!"

But she was gone.

He sat on, staring at the closed door. For a little he was as far past fear as he was past hope.

Then again he became conscious of impending dread, and with the consciousness came thought, and with thought came the supremest suffering of his life.

If Owen never recovered consciousness, if he died in his stupor without speaking,

then Mary would still be his.

He got up and began to pace the room with quick, irregular steps, though he knew if he walked across the world he would never outpace that thought.

"If Owen dies, you will keep Mary!"

What a queer paper they had put on the walls of that room! The sprays of flowers seemed to writhe and twist together. And he hated the pattern of the rugs—scarlet on grey. What did he remember that had been scarlet and grey? The rocks under the log when they picked up Owen?

"If Owen never speaks, Mary will love

you yet!"

He leaned against the wall, idly picking at the paper—the wall that separated him from Owen. Owen was only a few feet away. It was as if he did not exist. So it would be with all the good things, the pleasant things, the desirable things of life, if Owen spoke. They would be there to hand, and it would be as if they did not exist for him any longer.

His lips just formed words: "I-hope

He stopped. Breath was hardly his. The weight of the thought seemed to be crushing his life out. He clenched his hands. He whispered again, slowly, slowly: " I—hope—he—-

"Oh, I can't!" cried Channing suddenly.

"Oh, I can't! Not that!"

He laid his arms along the wall, and against them, like a child, he hid his face. It was over. He was finished. He would fight no more. What punishment would be his, that he would take. He was broken. As Owen let go on the log, so he let go on all the things that had made his life.

Presently, through the wall, he whispered to Owen. "I hope you'll live, old man," he said, as though Owen could hear. "I hope you'll-speak."

" Mr. Channing!"

He turned. The day nurse was beside He began to tremble. She said quickly: "The doctor is here. Yes, he came in at the other door, as he hoped you might be resting. He thinks—there is a slight change—he thinks Mr. Owen may be waking. If he recovers consciousness completely, it would be as well he should see someone he knows, some friend. Come. please."

A great stillness possessed him as he

followed her into the darkened room.

The young doctor was leaning over the Another, an older man whom Channing did not know, was standing by the window. As Channing and the nurse entered, he moved the drapery with which the window had been darkened. A ray of clear light fell on the face of the man lying in the bed.

Obedient to a motion of the young doctor's hand, Channing went and stood on the other side of the bed, so that his face would be the first his friend's awakening eyes would see.

He himself saw nothing in the world but Owen's face.

At first he saw no change in it. It looked the same as it had done through those interminable hours, except that the shadows in it were a little deepened. Then he saw a faint motion, a flicker of sense, a hovering stress, in the forehead, in the muscles of the mouth. It was the approaching consciousness of pain.

The young doctor, his fingers on Owen's wrist, glanced across at the other and nodded. Quietly Channing leaned a little nearer. He deliberately turned his own face in the light, so that Owen would see him clearly.

He waited.

The room was utterly still. Outside, a child's voice broke into laughter and a song. Another voice—a woman's—hushed it. He heard the child say: "Oh, mummie, I'm sorry—I forgot."

Then Owen's eyes were open and looking

into Channing's.

Channing waited.

Clear recollection was in Owen's eyes—knowledge, memory. He looked at the man who had been his friend, and that man knew he remembered.

Channing stood still, waiting for the

burning brand.

He was steady, cold as steel—steeled for his punishment. It did not come. The young doctor, watching Owen anxiously, said imperatively: "Speak to him." "Owen, old man, do you know me?"
Owen's lips moved. It was coming—
now. This moment was a blade, dividing

his life in two.

Still Owen did not speak. His intent and solemn regard never wavered. From some high standing-ground beyond and above life he seemed to look at Channing. Perfectly motionless, Channing met that look, and his own was a confession—he was too broken for a prayer.

Then he knew.

He, the man without beliefs, seemed to see God gazing at him through Owen's eyes with sternness, with judgment, with infinite compassion.

He knew then that it did not in the least matter whether he had done that deed or whether he had only thought it. The thought was all, the will was all that mattered.

He knew also that he would never know if he had done it—that no one would ever know but Owen.

With a low sound, he slipped on his knees and hid his face against Owen's hand.

Again the room was infinitely still.

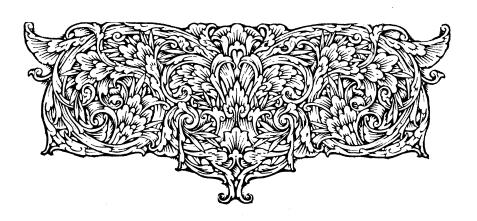
Then Owen spoke, with affection, with solemn compassion.

"Poor Channing!" he said. "Poor—old—Channing!"

His eyes closed.

Presently the doctor touched Channing on the shoulder. "Come," he said, "you can rest now, my dear fellow. He knew you and spoke reasonably. It's all right. There's no injury that time won't heal. You can rest now."

"Yes," said Channing humbly, "I can rest now. But leave the doors open, in case—in case he should want me again."



STILL LIVING

By OWEN OLIVER

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

RS. LANE was turning over brass knockers in an old curiosity shop, and hesitating between a mitred bishop and a tailed goblin. She held up one in each hand for comparison, and then her eye fell upon a picture half hidden by a china Buddha and some Venetian vases. She laid down the knockers and pointed

with her plump forefinger.
"Why," she cried, "it's Mary Carruthers! Look, John!"

Her portly husband put up his eyeglass and looked.

"When she was young?" he suggested.

"Yes, yes. Before your time. I've only seen her two or three times since. It was when we were two schoolgirls that we were such friends; and just afterwards. . . . Somehow Mary stands out from the other girls I knew. She wasn't quite like anybody else. She was so full of fancies. I was, too, When you grow old, and there's too much of you, you lose them." She shook her head at herself. "You can't be fat and fanciful."

"Oh," said Mr. Lane, "I thought you could! What's the 'fancy' now, missus?"

"I was thinking . . . It's so wonderfully like her, you see. It was some artist from Aberdeen who painted it. Mary was reckoned a beauty then, and he worried her father to let him make a picture of her. Mr. Carruthers said Mary could do as she liked. So she sat, of course."

"Of course?" Mr. Lane queried.

"Mary always did what anybody wanted," Mrs. Lane explained. "She was like that. He was going to send it to the Academy. I expect he did, but it didn't get in. We never heard any more of it. There was something wrong in the perspective, Mr. Foster said-my drawing-master, you know. I don't care about that. It was wonderfully lifelike. If you looked at it one way, you could fancy it smiled. I can now."

"Smiled, eh?" Mr. Lane said critically. "Looks to me more as if she wanted to

cry! Rather expressionless, if you ask me; but you can't see it properly behind all that stuff. Put it on the table, Jacobs."

Old Jacobs propped the picture upon the table and dusted it, setting it at the best

angle for the light.

"Beautiful piece of work," he claimed. "Oils. Good state of preservation. Signed and dated. Andrew MacPherson, 1887.

"Thirty-three years ago," Mrs. Lane calculated. "Mary would have been fiftytwo; fat like me, I expect! She died five vears ago."

"Probably fat then," her husband sug-

"Don't, dear! She could never bear to be made fun of. . . Dear little Mary! Always in earnest. She was so brave in some things-moral courage, you know. She had a tooth out without a sound. went with her. But she was timid about the dark and all that kind of thing. I can't bear to think of her all alone in this gloomy shop at night—her picture, I mean."
"Umph!" Mr. Lane grunted. "I'm glad

you've got over being fanciful! However, if you want it-I suppose you do, eh?"

"It is a fine work of art," Mr. Jacobs declared—"a very fine piece."

"Work of art be hanged!" Mr. Lane grunted. "It's out of perspective-whatever that is," he added internally. "There's a crack in the left shoulder. No one wants portraits of an unknown person by an unknown artist, as you very well know, Jacobs. How long have you had it?"

"Your good lady knew her," Mr. Jacobs observed. He rubbed his hands persuasively.

"For that reason I'll give you a couple of pounds for it," Mr. Lane offered. "For that reason only. Frame's got the dry-rot. Been a long time in the shop, eh?"

"I wait to get my price for a valuable piece like that," Mr. Jacobs stated. "If I sent it up to London, I might get a hundred pounds, perhaps. It is a beautiful piece of portraiture—lifelike, as your good lady has

observed. Speaking as man to man, it is worth five-and-twenty pounds. From you, Mr. Lane, I'll take ten.

"You won't," Mr. Lane denied.

They haggled for a long time. Ultimately Mr. Lane bought the picture for four pounds fifteen shillings.

"Though I don't know what you are going to do with it," he told his wife.
"I shall send it to her people," she stated.

"Thank you, dear. You see, Mary was a regular home-bird. Couldn't bear to be away from her own folk. It was curious what a lot they thought of her. I mean the way that she could persuade them into things. They were all strong and big and determined and clever, and a bit—well, contentious, you know. Mary wasn't any of those things. Yet they always listened to her, and she was always able to make peace between them. She had an influence over people somehow. Just now—I know I am a little fanciful still, but it's your fault for always humouring me."

"I do it for peace and quietness," he

claimed.

"No, you don't! Good old Jack!... Well, just now the picture seemed to look and look at me, till I could almost hear her speak. 'Send me home! . . . Send me home! That's what she said—at least, that's what came into my head; it's what she would say. I shall send her to Richard Carruthers. I don't know the address of the others, and I can get his. He was her eldest brother. He used to tease her most, but I think he was fondest of her. He's a big man now. Carruthers, Clark, and Hudson, you know; but he bought the others out. He's worth a lot of money. He was quite a nice fellow. He seemed stern, but so do you. I wonder why he never married."

"Clever, you said," Mr. Lane observed,

in an explanatory tone.
"Yes, except in that... Mary had a son, but Mrs. Jerrold says that he went utterly to the bad. I expect she wants to go and put things right. You may laugh, but if I died, and someone sent my picture to

"I'm not laughing," Mr. Lane denied. "At least, not at that. I was congratulating myself on your having got over fancies,

missus. . . Well, it's a kind one."

"What the devil is this?" cried Mr. Carruthers, when they brought the big, flat parcel into his private office. suppose it's that drawing of the new crane!

Why the deuce have they wasted money on a frame for it? Anyway, I don't want it here, Jackson. Put it up in the waiting-

"It's marked 'Strictly private,' sir," Jackson observed. "I didn't know if it might be a portrait or something of the

kind."

"Umph! 'Strictly private,' eh?" Mr. Carruthers gazed at the parcel with rather an unfriendly eye. He hadn't much business which was excessively private nowadays; but you never know what may come out of the past. Women are such fools! "Oh, well, stick it down there. I'll open it presently."

He finished a memorandum after the clerk went out, then he unfastened the package. Between the outer cover and the tissue-paper he found a note in a woman's hand. bore neither signature nor address, only a

couplet.

The dead still live while any cares To bear the burden that was theirs.

"Appeal for a subscription," he thought. "Home for someone or something! dead haven't present-day taxation, anyhow!"

He ripped off the tissue-paper, stood holding it and staring at the uncovered

portrait.

" Mary!... Little Sis!... The old thing that chap from Aberdeen or somewhere painted. Deuced pretty kid she was then... It's got her way of looking at you when she was coaxing you to do things, or not to do them. Generally that with me! Most fruit was forbidden to Mary, and to those who listened to her! And she'd a way of persuading you, too. I used to tell her that she made her conscience a nuisance to other people, as well as to herself. Well, I don't take after her!"

He laughed grimly and stood the picture

on a chair.

"Nobody else thinks I have a conscience, except the lioness!" he muttered. meant Miss Freda Lyon, his very competent confidential clerk—the nearest approach he had to a friend, he sometimes thought. "Umph!... It mayn't be much of a work of art, but it's wonderfully like Mary . . . Her 'Won't you, dear ?' way of looking when she was coaxing you to do something for somebody else. It was always somebody else. Quite a job to find out anything she wanted for herself. . . The most unselfish woman that ever breathed, I should think. ... She went young. ... Poor old Mary!"



""Beautiful piece of work,' he claimed. "Oils. Good state of preservation."

He sat down and stared at the picture, with his hand on his chin.

Presently Jackson came in. He turned to go away when he noticed how his chief was engaged.

"Beg pardon," he apologised.
"You needn't go," Carruthers told him. "It isn't a guilty secret—this time. My sister. . . Not much like me, ch?"



"Thirty-three years ago,' Mrs. Lane calculated. "Mary would have been fifty-two."

"Done some years ago?" Jackson suggested.

"Thirty. I was younger, too, of course. . . . My mother used to say there was a likeness in features."

"Yours would have more character,"

Jackson thought — "a bit harder, per-.

haps."

"Harder? Yes. I think she was the 'softest' woman I ever knew.... She died four years ago. No, five. Time slips on."
He sighed.

"There's a likeness to someone else," Jackson observed. "Not in expression, of course, but in features—nose and mouth. Do you see it, sir? I mean that young man Deedes."

"My nephew. Her son.... Young blackguard! Perhaps it's as well she didn't live longer. He'd have worried the life out of her, and she mine, pestering me to do things for him.... The waster!"

Jackson nodded.

"A real bad lot," he agreed. "Past praying for. I wasn't going to bother you about it, but, since we've got on to him, he came back here yesterday, more down-atheels than ever—been drinking. I told him you wouldn't see him, and you were done with him." Carruthers nodded. "Curious how good mothers come to have bad sons."

"That's why, I suppose. But she might have done something with him if she had lived. She had a curious influence over/ people. Over me, even. You wouldn't say

I was an easy man to influence."

"No." Jackson shook his head. "It isn't often I can, and I doubt if anybody could, unless it was Miss Lyon. She has the knack of managing people. She got her way about that bookcase, and——"

Carruthers laughed.

"In the little things," he owned. "She's a tyrant over me in them. I was thinking of big ones.... My sister might persuade me to give him another chance—"

"It would be the fourth," Jackson warned

nım

"I know, I know. I shan't do it, but I might, if she were still alive. Well, she isn't, and a picture can't do it. No, no, my dear. . . . It's very like her, though. . . . Have you brought that contract? Oh, that's it. Let's run through the thing."

When Carruthers had finished with the contract, and finally decided that Miss Lyon should compare it with the previous one in a summary next day—she was away that afternoon, and no one else in the office had her knack of summarising—he went and had another look at the portrait, and then

paced up and down the room.

"I wonder," he reflected, "if she could have done anything with the boy? I was just as pig-headed and nearly as wild, though I wasn't a rotter like him. She could always get over me. Even her picture seems to have some influence, but it's just the memory of her, I suppose. The way she'd look...." He stopped in his walk and shook his head at it. "It's that wistful

look does it. . . . It's no use, old girl. The boy's gone too far for help, even if he's your boy. Can't be done. . . . Poor old Mary! What a grief he would have been to her! She would never have given up hope of him. . . . I shan't look at her any more. She'll only worry me to be a blinking fool!"

He kept his eyes from the portrait till he was leaving and had turned out the lights. Then the gas-lamp outside shone upon it through the window. It just caught the face. The eyes seemed to plead, the mouth to speak. Carruthers seemed to hear her.

"Oh, Dick! My son!... He was my baby once... And now I can only live in what others do.... He would listen to me.... He was a baby once, you see. When you saw him first, he clutched at your fingers..."

"I wish I'd wrung his little neck!"

Carruthers muttered.

"I'm not afraid of you, Dick. Big, fierce old thing! You'd never hurt my baby, or anyone's . . . I wanted to live a little longer, Dick, just to help him. I can if someone bears my burden. . . . I know who will!"

"Oh, hang!" Carruthers groaned. "Oh, hang! If it was any use, Mary, I'd give him another chance—if it was any use at

all. It isn't. He's gone too far."

"Mothers never say that, dear.... Dicky, I didn't want to go and leave him alone. He always seemed a baby to me, you know. My own little child!... You said he was like me then. You were always good to me, Dick. So kind to your silly little sister when she lived.... Oh, Dick! And now I'm dead!"

Carruthers turned away and strode to the door, turned the handle, paused, and came back again. He touched the picture gently and nodded, blinking at it with wet

"You still live, Mary," he said. "Still

live, my dear."

"Aren't you well?" Mr. Carruthers asked the Lioness quickly, when he entered his room the next morning. She was a tall, slim young woman of five-and-thirty, and her complexion was usually pinkish. On this occasion it was white.

"Yes," she said slowly and unsmiling—she was generally rapid and smiling—"I think I am well . . . I am well, but I have something to tell you, and you will be disturbed—annoyed, too, I expect . . . Mr. Carruthers, I have always wanted to be a

real help to you. I have never wanted to so much as this morning."

"Why," he cried, "of course! You are a real help. What is it, my dear girl?"

"Someone has been here in the night," she informed him reluctantly, "broken open your desk, taken the money that you put in there. Jackson says you did. Sixty-two pounds eighteen shillings and fourpence by the slip. I've always told you to put it in the safe, if I'm not here to do it."

He smiled.

"When the cat's away!" he said. "You masterful young woman! It isn't the cat's fault. I shall suffer for my own sin—apart from your great displeasure! Well, the loss of sixty pounds won't hurt me."

"No, but if it makes you lose other things—confidence and trust in people—in her!" She pointed to the portrait. "She seemed almost as if she spoke to me and said that." Miss Lyon wiped her eyes.

"Eh? It's that young blackguard! Her son! I'll have him in gaol. I'll—"

"No, you mustn't. You shan't!"
Shan't!" he almost shouted.

"She won't let you."

"You said 'shan't,' "Carruthers remarked testily. He was a man used to command, and it sometimes struck him that his secretary got a good deal of her own way, especially since he had influenza, and she came to read to him in the afternoons.

"Well, if you do, I shall leave."

"Then you'll have to!" he thundered.

"I won't! Nobody else sees after younow. She used to. Look at her, Mr. Carruthers. Doesn't she seem to plead? Notice her eyes and her mouth."

"Umph! What do you know about

her?"

"He left these," she said. She produced two letters, and handed him one. "This tells me a great deal, a great, great deal—knowing you!"

The first letter was the one that he had sent round to his nephew's lodging the night before. He knew that as soon as he set eyes upon it, but he read it through again.

DEAR HENRY,—

When I told you that I would do no more for you, I meant what I said, because I felt that I could do you no good.

Someone has sent me a portrait of your mother when she was a girl, and did me good. I wonder if she can influence you?

I think you loved her once. If so, come and see her. If she can move you to swear by her memory that you will make an honest attempt to re-establish yourself by real, hard work and decent living—no other way will do; understand that—I will find one more chance for you, away from here. I shall do this, not for you and not for myself, but feeling that the dead can still live in those who do for them what they themselves would have done.

Understand that this is the last chance

I shall give you.

Your uncle, RICHARD CARRUTHERS.

"Perhaps if you had said just a word of personal affection," the girl remarked, "it ,

might have touched him."

"You are infernally critical of me this morning," Carruthers growled, "and I haven't the slightest affection for him. Well, that's that. Proof to convict me as a fool in any court of justice. . . . Give me the other."

The girl handed him the other letter.

KIND UNCLE,-

Mother evidently didn't make much of

a job of you!

I have accepted your pressing invitation to call, but I found a dust sheet over the picture, and haven't removed it, as I wanted all the influence preserved for you. I have taken your help in the form in which I prefer it. A little loose cash can't mean much to you, or you'd take more care of it. You'll rave and swear about prosecuting me, but you won't. Mother's influence will be too strong! Look at the picture before you send for the police, and then you won't. Anyhow, I'm chancing it.

Your affectionate nephew, HENRY.

Carruthers stared at the letter for a long time. Then he stared at the portrait. The Lioness stared at him.

"Well, Mary," he said at last, "even you

would give him up now!"

"Never!" cried Miss Lyon. "Never! She would never give up her son! And you can't. You left the paper that came with the picture. She still expects to live in you. I—I—you've a right to be angry. You can send me away, of course. I don't know what you'll do without me, though. Nobody else seems to care about—about the firm—like I do. This is what I sent to him. It was a telegram."

She dumped a piece of paper on one end of the desk, and her face in her hands on the other. The message on the paper was this—

"Come and see me, dear son.—Mother."

"Of course," Miss Lyon sobbed, "it's impudence. I know that! Impudence is only another name for—for liking people who—who are good to you, and being interested in their affairs. I suppose I'm hysterical this morning, but—"

"You are," Carruthers stated. "Never

mind."

"I'm not; and I do mind . . . I feel as if the portrait were your sister herself come to help him, and you, too—and you!"

"And you did this to help him?"

Carruthers suggested.

She mopped her eyes.

"I've never been a fool like this before," she observed. "Yes, I did it to help him, as she would if she were still living, you see."

"I see." Carruthers laid his hand on her

shoulder. "And what are you going to do, on my sister's account, for me? . . . Freda, my dear—"

"Anything I did for you," Miss Lyon said firmly, "would be done for yourself.... Perhaps I'd be a little nicer on her account, though... I'd need to borrow some patience from somewhere, wouldn't I?"

"I'm very, very fond of you," Carruthers

claimed rather unsteadily.

"I've guessed that ever so long," she stated. "I am, too!"

* * * *

Presently they stood in front of the portrait together.

"You see, Mary," Carruthers told it, "you are still living for me. . . . But your boy, my dear——"

There was a knock at the door.

"Young Deedes is here, sir," Jackson announced. "He says he has come to see his mother's picture."

"You can show him in," said Carruthers.



HILL NOON.

CLOUD shadows dream across the hills, The pale gold tide of sunshine spills Over the pine woods, warm and deep, And the little wild thyme is asleep.

The air is heavy scented
With the hot, strong breath of firs;
In the wood-paths, shadow tented,
No smallest bird thing stirs.
Brown needles drift, as the sunrays shift,
The keening peeweet stills;
Soft winds the drowsy silence keep,
The little wild thyme is asleep.

A. M. LAWRENCE.

A LONGSHORE HERO

By JAMES BLYTH

ILLUSTRAȚED BY C. M. PADDAY

FIFTY years ago the few summer visitors who went to Cromer, to enjoy the finest air in England, drove over by coach from Norwich or North Walsham, or in their own carriages from their Norfolk seats. Tucker's Hotel, Breeze's cheese-cakes, and Murrell's four-in-hand donkeys at that time practically "made the place" so far as visitors were concerned. The old lighthouse still reared its gallant head on the gorse- and furze-clad hills. Round the noble flint-built church flint-built cottages clustered between the hotel and the main "gangway" down to the beach.

Here lived the crab-fishers, the finest race of all the splendid longshoremen who formed the first crews of the East Coast

lifeboats.

Lowestoft trawl-fishers are fine men, as many and many an enemy craft learned to its cost during the War. Yarmouth herring - drifters are hale, bluff, and courageous, but no men stand out so in my memory of forty years ago as the Cromer crabmen, the men who dared almost all weathers in their little broad-beamed, sharp-bowed and sterned lugsail beach boats.

This story was told me when I was a boy, sitting in one of the little flint-built cottages by the church, or leaning up to windward in a crab-boat as she heaved to the strength of a blow from the nor'ard. For both ashore and afloat have I heard fragments of the story of Dick Bates and Jim Harrison. And, to my mind, the only way really to appreciate it is to hear it when the bow of the crab-boat is snapping at the rising seas when she luffs to reach to the long row of corks afloat in the turmoil of the white, grey, and green wash which marks the lie of the pots.

Old Dick Bates lived with his grand-daughter Mary and her husband, Jim

Harrison, in one of the little cottages which wink their flint facets to the south of Church gangway. Mary was the only one of old Dick's numerous progeny who remained at Cromer. She was the daughter of a son who had been lost in a gallant attempt by the Cromer Beach Yawl (before the time of lifeboats) to save the crew of a coasting brig which had gone ashore on Happisburgh sands. All old Dick's children had been sons, and the others, all but Mary's father, had taken to deep waters or the Navy, and been lost sight of for "yares and yares." Therefore it is not surprising that all the old man's affection had centred in Mary.

He had no fault to find with his darling's husband. Jim Harrison was almost as fine a man as old Dick himself. Both of them stood over six feet in height, were close on fifty inches round their brawny chests, and carried lights in the shape of blue-grey eyes which could face any spindrift or gale unflinchingly, and descry the top of the mains'l of a billyboy from Goole, the hull of which was down over the horizon.

They were partners in a boat and a number of crab-pots, and few of their local competitors did better than, or so well as, the old man and his grandson-in-law.

But in September of 1868 the little cottage and its occupants were hard pressed. For a time longer than the oldest fisherman in Cromer could recollect, the north-easter had rendered it dangerous for the crab-boats to put off. And money was exceptionally scarce with old Dick Bates and his "chillun." Mary's first child had been born early in September, and wine and delicacies had been prescribed by the doctor, and therefore wine and delicacies had to be bought by the firm. They had to come by coach from Norwich. The genial old general practitioner would have been delighted to

help, but no Cromer crabman would have condescended to accept "charity." "We bain't wuckh'us," was the uncompromising and rather uncivil reply, to all offers of assistance, by the longshoremen, who were possessed of a proper pride of race.

Mary had been frightened by a girl who had wanted to marry Jim herself, and so sacred was the superstition, legend, tradition—what you please to call it—which had been used to terrify the young wife, that the subject was avoided by her grandfather and husband rather than ridiculed.

To this day a man of Norfolk blood—but no "furriner"—may learn from one of the oldest longshoremen that the bell of old Cromer Church, buried half a mile out to sea since the middle of the fourteenth century, still may be heard to toll its warning when a crab-boat puts out and sails across its former site, if the boat contain one who is soon to be drowned in the offing.

And Nelly Shardelow had giggled and told Mary that her brother Alfred had heard the bell toll as old Dick and Jim Harrison sailed out past the pierheads to lay their

pots

Since that day the weather had been too bad for any boat to put off, and absolute pennilessness confronted old Dick and his "chillun."

Of credit they would have none—they were used to pay their way—and their savings had all been eaten up by the expense occasioned by Mary's illness and the stimulants and foods prescribed for her

during her convalescence.

She had seemed a little easier since she told her husband about Nellie Shardelow and the church bell. He had pretended to disbelieve the legend, which at that time was an article of faith to every decent crabfisher from Trimmingham to Sheringham. She did not know that there was no more money in the cottage, and she was thankful that her husband had been unable to put off for a fortnight, so that she could keep him ashore with her. Her pretty gratitude irked the man and fretted her grandfather. But they both concealed their feelings, and used the broad vernacular words of obsecration only when they leant their clay pipes together over the kitchen fire and muttered in consultation as to what they should do

The cottage was similar to many hundreds which then housed and bred splendid men and women along the East Coast. On the ground floor were a living-room and kitchen in one, with a little yard at the back wherein the crab-pots, nets, long-lines, and other fishing paraphernalia were stored in a little tarred weather-boarded shed. On the first, and only other floor, were two bedrooms intercommunicating. As the outer one was the larger, this was shared by Mary and her husband, and old Dick had to pass through it on his way to his own little low-roofed cubby.

In the 'sixties and 'seventies families of ten or a dozen were reared in such cottages —reared to be fine men and women, kept clean by the cleanliness of the sea-breeze blowing straight from the North Pole to

Cromer beach.

Dick Bates and his grand-daughter and Jim were fortunate in the space they could enjoy. All about them was crowding, which, thank Heaven, can be found there

no longer.

On the evening of September 18, old Dick and Jim sat in the kitchen, the former on a wooden chair, and the latter on an upturned crab ped (hamper), thrusting their grand heads close together against the fire of wreckage and coal picked up on the beach. In the room above, Mary hushed her baby to sleep, and drowsed herself as the mutter of the two men soothed her senses.

"Jim, bor," said Dick, "tha'ss tew long to leave them pots, and we hain't got a sixpence left. I'm a-goin' out to-morrer, blow hard, blow sorft, and pick up the pots. If this here blow keep on, we shall lose 'em,

sure to goodness!"

"You may find a sight o' crabs," said Jim, "but I doubt they'll be starved. You know better'n me as crabs 'ull only go for fresh feesh! Unless crabs got into the pots fust or second day arter droppin' 'em, you'll find naught but lobsters. They'll eat any offal, the dutty warmin!"

"What an' if I do?" said the grandfather. "Don't they fetch better brass than

the crabs, bor?"

"Hark to the blow," said Jim. "Bor, I tell ye you'll never be able to get off! You'll be swamped afore ye get t'rough the fust o' the wash!"

"Be you herrin'-gutted, Jim?" asked the old man earnestly. "Doan't ye know as we ha' finished the port wine and jelly, and we must send in by cootch to-morrer for some more?"

Jim gave a gesture of despair.

"I'd gi'e my life for her," he said simply.

"You oan't have to do that," said the old man. "You'll only have to come out wi' me in the boot to-morrow. I ha' took tiller and lug out in wuss winds than we've got a-blowin' now!"

The old man was superb as he stood there, his ruddy wrinkled chafts shining a red bronze in the firelight amidst the circle of grey rugged hair which fringed his face from his brow, round his clean-shaven cheeks, beneath his bare chin, so that his features looked like a Rembrandt face, framed in the grey matted hair.

And, outside, the equinoctial gale howled round the church square, beating back from the flint tower to Tucker's, and from Tucker's to the cottages by the gangway

leading to the beach.

The ebb tide served at first dawn on the morrow, and Mary was asleep when Jim and the old man stole carefully from the inner room through the larger chamber.

They crept down the corkscrew staircase in their great boot-stockings, and it was not till they had eaten a snack of a score longshore herring, fried in salt, and swallowed a pint or two of rum and water, that they wrestled themselves into their sea-boots in the yard at the back of the cottage.

No one else was about. The gangway was clear save for them. A score boats were hauled up to the very terrace which ran round the low cliff to the north of the gangway. A few yards from the foot of the slope to the beach masses of lathery foam spumed and flew along the grumbling shingle as the blast of the northerly wind caught them from out the shelter of the projecting bit of sea-wall.

Out to the east and north-east a grey turmoil of tossing water hissed and roared. But for a coasting brigantine, scurrying southward three miles out, under reefed foretopsail and jib only, the sea off Cromer

looked a dreary and angry waste.

Jim shivered a little as he followed the older man to their boat. He carried mast and lugs'l on his shoulders. Old Dick was ahead with the heavy ashen paddles, with their lead rim round them, which took the pressure of the lead-lined paddle-holes pierced in the gunwales to act as rowlocks in work so strenuous that rowlocks could not be trusted.

"We shan't never be able to git her off by ourselves," said Jim, who had not the undauntable courage of the old man.

Old Dick had laid the paddles in a stout

sharp-bowed and sterned longshore boat which was the furthest out seawards of all those nestling up the gangway. Now that he was concentrated on work which he, better than anyone else, knew to be perilous, he was impatient of Jim's querulous timidity. Swiftly he laid some planks, with iron cores running lengthwise down them, at right angles to the course of the boat as she would thrust out to sea.

He heaved her bow on to the first and shouted: "Come you on and give a hand! I'll shove ye off and clamber in as she rises to the breakers. Come and set yer back

agin her!"

The two mighty men turned their backs to the bold swell of the sheer of the boat from her sternpost, and with tautened sinews of neck, back, arms, thighs, calves and even feet, they heaved her so that she slid down over those iron ribs projecting from the

planks laid down in her path.

Again and again they heaved, and again and again the planks must needs be taken from the stern, which had overshot them, and placed ahead. At length her nose tingled to the salt tang of the wash, and the heaving men felt the gallant craft give a little shiver of ecstasy. "Heoy, heoy, heoy!" shouted old Dick.

And Jim, as ignorant as his grandfather that he was repeating the old Norse war-cry "Aoi," shouted the cry of the East Coast beachmen lustily: "Heoy, heoy, heoy!"

Old Dick did not desire his grandson to look too closely seawards. The grey-green seas, maddened by the meeting of the ebb-tide with the north-by-east blow, were leaping up till their wash smothered the end of the old pier, still suffering from the smashing blow which a drifting wreck had inflicted on it a few years previously.

As the men bent and shoved, they did not feel the full weight of the wind. "Jump you in!" said old Dick, steadying the stern of the boat and beckoning to Jim. "Step the mast, bend the lug ready—you'd best take in t'ree reefen—and then get the paddles out while I shove off and get aboard."

He thrust heartily, and the boat was soon awash, lifting to the race of the foaming wash. Jim clambered aboard, and his work was done speedily and well. He was as skilful as his grandsire, if he had not the old North Sea man's heart.

Dick gave a look, saw that all was right, waited for the incoming wash of a breaker, and thrust out the quivering boat as her



"He stumbled forward and held out the paddle in the hope it might reach the old man. But old Dick without a sign of

nose tossed and shied at the pressure on her bows.

"Heoy, heoy, heoy!" shouted the old man. Rushing forward till the tear of the indraught and backwash was over his thighs, he scrambled over inboard as the boat tossed angrily to the crest of the first breaker, while Jim put forth every ounce of his great strength to force her out with the paddles.

Half a dozen, a dozen mighty pulls on those great ashen staves, and the boat was shaking her head, dancing and leaping in an angry choppy sea, but outside the incurve of the swamping breakers.

Instantly old Dick fixed the rudder and

drew on the halyard, which sent the gaff of the sail up to the head of the little mast.

"Belay that there halyard to the windward cleat, bor!" he said to Jim. "That'll act as a stay, and that'll blow somethin' funny when we get out from unner the lee of the pier."

Now that Jim was at sea and at work, his timidity was forgotten. He had been to sea in worse weather in the beach yawl, but never in so small a craft. However, he knew his grandfather's fame, and he sympathised with the old man's desire to bring home some brass for Mary. Besides, he was a born crab-fisher, and the excitement of the moment brisked him.



was now clear of it by three or four yards . . . his old white-fringed face bobbing up in the choppy sea terror upon it." \bullet

"Sweesh!" went the sea against the lee gunwale, and the lumping toss of the spindrift over the windward bow set the weather-beaten faces of the men a-tingle with the joy of the fray.

In such weather old Dick, of course, took both tiller and sheet. He sat nestling up on the windward side of the sternpost, with one sea-boot cast over the tiller. He bent outward to windward as the wind caught the lug free of the shelter of the pier, and eased the sheet a bit, though he brought her head a trifle more to the wind. Then he laughed.

"Did ye hear the bell, bor?" he asked Jim, who was watching his grandfather-in-

law carefully, and wondering if he would ever obtain such a wonderful mastery over a boat as to steer with his foot in such a sea. "We passed over the old chutch a min't or two ago. Did ye hear the bell, bor?"

His attention was suddenly distracted by one of those unpleasant cross seas which come up under the stern without notice and sluice over the gunwale into the boat. The old man said no more at the moment, but as he ceased to speak, Jim looked about him. They were, it was true, clear of the protection of the pier, but they were not yet to the north of the pier, and they were on the exact spot which he had always been taught to believe was the site of the old Cromer Church, "drownded a thousand

year ago."

It was, no doubt, fancy, caused by the old man's words, by the prevalence of the tradition, and by the dangerous circumstances which prevailed. At any rate, Jim started so clumsily that old Dick cried out: "What are ye arter, bor? D'ye want ta upset us?"

He (Jim) answered nothing, but in his head still tolled the three reverberations which he could swear he had heard, the dull but distinct "Cliclang, cliclang, cliclang," And the legend had it that the old church bell resembled a ship's bell striking six bells, rather than the imposing and solemn note of an ecclesiastical summons to attend the public worship ordained by the Church.

"We shall ha' to make a beat or two," said old Dick, "'thout the wind come more

off shore."

And, as he spoke, the wind shifted, not off shore, but certainly more to the north-west.

"Luck's with us!" cried the old man. "We shan't ha'e to change tack!"

The boat went spuming through the waves, leaping like a salmon at a weir, dashing the wash from her cutwater and its after-lines, thoroughly enjoying herself, it might have been thought.

But her leaps were a little strained to one who knew her so well as old Dick, her gaiety of movement seemed to the understanding septuagenarian a trifle forced. And for the first time he hesitated. He knew the soul of the boat. Was she warning him?

Still Jim said nothing of that sound which he believed he had heard—that tolling of a bell sunken four hundred years

past.

While he caressed tiller and sheet with a daintiness only possible to born small-boat sailors, old Dick's eyes swept the shore. It was not till he got the point of a hedge in line with an inland church steeple that he thrust up his tiller, eased his sheet, and worked out further seawards. It is by landmarks, by getting two easily discerned points of land or of building, a tree or a chimney, a haystack or a church, "in line" that the longshoremen fix their deep holes or their favourite sites for crab or lobster pots.

"I'll heave up, bor," said the old man, when he came in sight of a long row of oval corks floating and swaying in the rough sea, attached to a coarse line browned by

"cutch." "That's a bit wobbly. Do you take the paddles and hold her stiddy while I heave."

He brought the boat up into the eye of the wind, strode easily forward, unstepped the mast and laid it down in the boat. He moved it on one side, so that Jim had room to sit on the centre thwart and get out the paddles. Still, Jim was a bit cramped. He had not the freedom he would have liked in so tricky a sea.

"Lor a massy me!" said old Dick, as he bent over the bows with a boathook and fished for the cork-buoyed rope. "That do fare somethin' onsteady, doan't it? Howsomedever, we're the on'y ones out, and we ought to get a rare old price for what we take ashore. And Mary want it!"

He bent and took the cork-buoyed line in his hands and began to heave on it.

A crab or lobster-pot off Cromer or Sheringham is a wicker-covered trap something like the ordinary wire rat-trap, but ten times its size. Its base is weighted with lead to make it sink. It cannot be necessary to describe the shape of the East Coast crab-pot, but it is likely that most people who have seen it are unaware of its weight.

As he hauled, the boat ran up to the weight of the pot, which acted like an anchor. The little short broad-beamed craft pitched and tossed abominably.

"Hold her stiddy while I h'ist," said old

Dick.

The line attached to the pot was now coming up from below practically at right angles to the sea-bed. The whole weight was now on the line.

Old Dick bent over the bows to get a clear haul. "Tha'ss somethin' heavy," he said, as he hauled in hand over hand.

The toss and agitation of the boat disturbed him a little, old hand as he was. He did not stow his cork line clear; he hauled it in a little carelessly, and, with the malice of all lines, it entangled itself about his legs and feet.

Jim had the paddles, and was trying to keep the boat steady in spite of the sea, the waves of which were deeper and heavier than closer in. But the mast and sail made it awkward for him. He was ill at ease, fretted with an indefinite foreboding.

Then it happened.

"We must ha' got a rare old cop," said old Dick, bending low over the bows to get a better purchase on the line. "Look you out!" he yelled. "That's a-comin'!"

As frequenters of the North Sea know,

in rough weather it is not unusual that now and then a wave, broken or not, of exceptional weight and momentum, rises suddenly

out of the grey flurry.

A curling breaker, stretching at least six feet over the average height of the wash, roared up under the very nose of the old man. He heaved, the jerk put an intense strain upon him, his hobnails slipped on the wet bottom boards, he struggled, shouted, tried to release himself from the line which had now got entangled round him, and shot overboard as the strain depressed the bows.

At the same moment Jim, flustered, fidgeted with his paddles. The great sea caught the blade of one of them with an enormous smack and tore it out of the controlling hand. In an instant it had swept out of the hole through the gunwale, where lead had lain to lead, and Jim found himself being forced back by the action of both tide and wind, while old Dick Bates was struggling on the surface of the broken sea, hampered with the corks of the crabpot. It was a chance for him that the line had run free till the pot resumed its rest upon the bottom of the North Sea. But for that, he would have been immersed at once and would have been unable to leave his last wishes to be fulfilled.

As soon as Jim realised what was happening, he sprang to his feet and tried to use his one remaining paddle sculling astern. But the sea and tide were too strong for that method of propulsion to be of any service in a boat built like a Cromer crab-boat.

He stumbled forward and held out the paddle in the hope it might reach the old man. But old Dick was now clear of it by three or four yards. He was on his back, his old white fringed face bobbing up in the choppy sea without a sign of terror upon it. His hands seemed to be busied about something connected with the cord which had helped to cause the disaster.

Gran'faa'er," shouted Jim, "I ha' lost a paddle! I can't do nothin'! Can't I do

nothin'?"

"I reckon you can't," said the old man very amiably. "You ha' doned your best. Tain't owing to you as I'm in this confoozledum. I'm done for, bor. But there's a sight o' lobsters in the pot. I seed 'em 'fore that there gre't swell come."

Jim drifted further apart, and a dash of water caught the old man in the mouth

and made him eject it with disgust.

"These here boots do me!" shouted old

Dick, when Jim had succeeded in getting the bows towards the pot again by means of the one remaining paddle. "You'll get some brass wi' the lobsters, and I reckon you and Mary will fare all right. I on'y want one thing, bor. My ole wench she lie on yonner cliff, and I'd like to lie along o' her. I'm a-tyin' this here line round my body. You have the landmarks of the pots, and they'll be a-comin' out arter ye with the yoll when they see you're in trouble.

"I'm willin' to go. There'll be more room for ye, and the Beach Company will have to pay ye a bit o' brass and take ye in, seein' as I ha' give in your name. Goodbye tee ye, bor! I'm pretty nigh done. These here old boots, they worrit me drefful, and I can't get at my shut knife to cut 'em. Tell Mary not to worrit. But I'd like to lay alongside my old woman on the cliff yonner, and you'll prarmuss me you'll come out arter me and take me ashore?"

"I swear I will," half bellowed Jim. "Oh, can't I do nothin'?"

"Nobody can't, 'ceptin' God," gasped the old man, his mouth sinking lower now and being washed by almost every white horse. "Fare ye well, bor. I'll be a-goin."

A hungry sea, another large curving wave, roared over the spot where the old man had made himself fast to the crab-pot line, so that his body might be found and taken ashore to be buried alongside "the old woman."

The breaking crest heaved over the old man, bore him down, and he did not again rise above the broken water.

Two hours later the beach yawl—ah, the gallant craft !--came roaring out under three half-reefed lug's'ls to rescue Jim Harrison, whose distress had been observed from the yawl station.

They thought him half insane when he begged them to pick up the "chimney pot"

pots first.

But when they heard the story they understood. In silent reverence they salved the body of the old man who had gone to the sea he loved and understood. And when they found in the fatal pots on the "chimney pot" mark such a catch of lobsters as had never been seen before, there was a thoughtful silence in the yawl.

Old Dick had his way. Mary was saved. Money became comparatively plentiful in Jim Harrison's cottage, and the old man was buried "alongside his missus" in the burial ground on the cliff.

It seemed quite the ordinary thing to the

Cromer men. There was some regret that Jim Harrison should take the place of the more experienced man in the Beach Company, otherwise it was considered that old Dick had come to a proper and quite conventional end.

But think of that brave old man, looking Death in the face and grinning at him while he bound his body in seaman's bends and hitches, so that it might be found and taken to lie ashore with his old wife on the cliff!

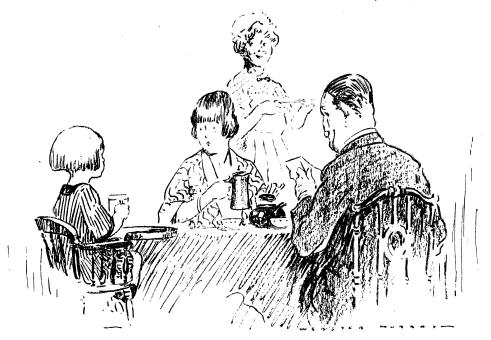


BLUE SKY IN LONDON.

T is a glorious day in London town!
The rumble of the city is a dream,
And I am wandering beside a stream
Where green beech boughs and willow fans droop down
To prick the glassy waters, that, unblown,
Above the sleeping grottos of the bream,
Quiet pools, glance up the stooping trunks, that seem
To wait for silence to make all things known.

There is the traffic of the universe,
 The caravan of Time, that journeys ever,
 Passionless, calm, towards the unseen goal;
 Unlike these huddled streets, whose swarms disperse
 Flotsam and jetsam of a moment's fever,
 Soiling the freshness of the human soul.

RICHARD CHURCH.



THE RISING GENERATION.

MOTHER (to four-year-old, who has just received her milk): What do you say, dear? FOUR-YEAR-OLD: Cheerio, old bean!

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

PEACHES.

By W. R. Young.

They were very poor—that is to say, they were living on capital while waiting for his job to turn up—and they were a sensible couple. They had reduced expenses to a minimum, and were content to live mainly in the future.

And then they got a letter from the Heaths old and dear friends—who said they were on a visit to the neighbourhood, and would like to come over one day and see them.

A letter was sent back expressing—quite sincerely-delight at the news, and suggesting a supper picnic on the river.

"Of course it will have to be a cheap show, Howard," said Cynthia, as she finished the

"I'm afraid it will," replied her husband. "Still, they'll understand the circumstances."

The day of the picnic arrived. Cynthia went to the town to shop, and Howard stayed behind. He took a stroll as far as the nursery gardener's in the course of the morning, but had returned home before his wife reappeared. She came in laden with parcels, which were unpacked by Howard with ill-concealed excitement. A tin of British Columbian salmon, three lettuces, a cucumber, and a bottle of Florence cream were examined in turn, but Howard made no comment till he came to the final package; it contained a tin of peaches.

"I say, Cynthia," he burst out, as he examined the label, "this is a bit thick, isn't

Cynthia looked guilty.
"But, darling," she protested, "we have to have a sweet. I know it's expensive, but it's only once in a way."

Howard opened his mouth to speak, but

Cynthia forestalled him.

"It cost four shillings," she announced, "but there's nothing else to be had. I've got three bananas, and I'll mix them with the peaches to make a fruit salad."

Howard picked up the daily paper. "But look at this," he began, pointing to a paragraph in it.

Cynthia would not look.
"Yes, I know," she said, ""Extravagance is unpatriotic, and it's playing into the hands of the profiteers,' and 'How can we tell the Government to economise when we are recklessly squandering money on luxuries?' I know all about that. But this is a special occasion.'

Howard again flourished the paper, but Cynthia had had enough.

"Anyway, it's done now," she snapped conclusively, and moved to the sideboard.

There was a package there which she had not brought in. She undid it and disclosed a basket containing six beautiful peaches.
"Did you get these, Howard?" she asked

sharply.

Howard nodded.

"Yes," he confessed, "I got them from the nursery this morning. Eighteenpence apiece. But they're beauties, aren't they?"

Cynthia looked aghast.

to import foodstuffs from America, the exchange is likely to continue adverse.' Your peaches come from California. That's what I was grumbling about.'

Cynthia returned to the table, "I wish I hadn't got the beastly tin," she said, biting her lip.

Howard felt he had gone too far.

"Never mind, darling," he comforted her.

"It's a special occasion, after all."
"You don't imagine," rejoined Cynthia, with fine scorn, "that I'm going to produce tinned

peaches side by side with real ones, do you? We'll have to use up the tin sometime when we are by ourselves."

There was a break in her

"And I shan't like them after tasting the others," she sobbed.



An old man, with a soft, daft look, used to sit on a park bench in the sun, with rod and line, as if he were fishing; but the line, with a worm on the hook, dangled over a bed of bright primroses.

"Crazy," the passer-by was sure to say to himself-"absolutely crazy! looking old chap, too. It's a pity." Then, with a gentle smile, the passer-by would approach the old man and ask: "What are you doing, uncle?"

"Fishing," came the solemn answer.

"Fishing, eh? Well, uncle, come now and have something with me.'

Whereupon the old man shouldered his rod and followed the kindly stranger to the corner cafe. There he would be regaled with food and drink. His host, contemplating him in a friendly, protecting way, as he sipped and smoked, would say:

uncle? And how many have you caught this morning?"

The old man real? "So you were fishing,

toward the ceiling and, after a pause, reply:

"You are the seventh, sir."



Passenger (very much worried about his train connections): Do you think, porter, the eleven-fifteen will leave on time?

PORTER: Well, sir, it's due to.



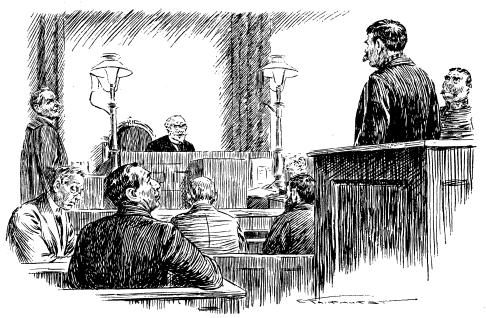
"LIFT, sir? Up these stairs, turn to your right, go down the passage, up the steps on your left, turn to your left, an' go down the passage facin' you till you come to another flight o' steps, an' the lift's at the top!"

"And you were grumbling at my spending four shillings!" she exclaimed hoarsely, "and waving The Daily Dispatch at me!"

Howard was conscious of a righteous cause. "These peaches, my dear, are home products," he said impressively. "Perhaps now you'll let me show you the passage I wanted you

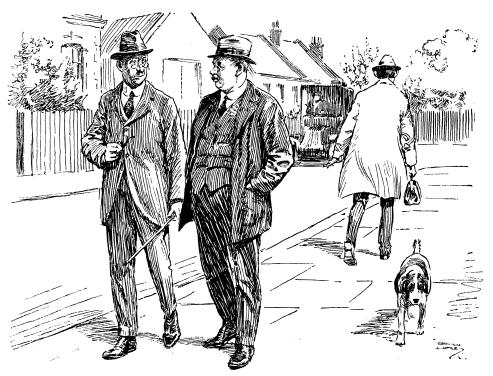
He read out from The Dispatch.

"'Alarming drop in sterling! £1 worth 4.16 dollars! etc., etc. So long as we continue



A RISE OUT OF THE LAW.

MAGISTRATE (inflicting fine for salmon poaching): Now, how soon can you pay this money? POACHER (off his guard): That depends on hoo the fish rise, yer honour!



THE CUT DIRECT.

[&]quot;That chap's my barber—shaved me for the last five years—yet he never acknowledges me if I nod to him in the street."
"Ah, he saw you are still bleeding."

SYMPATHETIC TREATMENT.

(According to the latest scientific diagnosis, juvenile naughtiness arises from stomach troubles, and should be remedied by massage.)

When "spare the rod and spoil the child" Was antidote for nursery racket. The nurse or guardian, getting riled, Would warm young hopeful's jacket.

Those childish spankings which of old We bore from our incensed begetters, Do not obtain to-day, we're told, Among our brainy betters. At last, after many days of troubled hunting, Mr. and Mrs. Jones found a small apartment which somewhat approached their modest ideal.

"This hall paper is dreadful," Mrs. Jones plaintively remarked, "but the agent said the landlord wouldn't change it, for it is in good condition."

"Never mind; we'll get a pretty, inexpensive paper and put it right over this," Mr. Jones

cheerfully suggested.

"Oh, Richard"—and his wife's look was full of reproach—"you know we can hardly get our furniture through this hall now, it's so narrow!"



A GENTLE HINT.

LADY: Why should I buy an egg-beater?

PEDLER: Well, the lady next door thought you might return hers if you did.

Temper, they reckon, is disease, And should, as such, be kindly treated. An urchin's inborn love to tease Is gastrically seated.

Moral: When Tommy's in disgrace, Provoking, peevish, or "contrairy," Don't smack him in the usual place— But massage little Mary.

Jessie Pope.

DICKIE's father was shocked to see his son kick his little playmate.

"Why did you kick John?" he asked severely.

"I am tired of playing with him. I want him to go home," was Dickie's answer.

"Then why didn't you ask him to go home?"

"Oh"—it was Dickie's turn to be shocked "why, daddy, that wouldn't be polite!"



PERFECTLY NATURAL. By Gilbert Davis.

THE door of the editor's office opened and the disturber walked in.

'Can't see anybody—too busy!" muttered the editor, without looking up from his desk. 'Ah, but you'll just find time to see me,"

repeated the editor, gazing at him in wonder. The poet was certainly a curious sight. His hair was long and carroty, and was surmounted by a yokel's hat, which he had not troubled to remove. He wore a holland smock and breeches. His legs were gaitered and his feet were enclosed in thick boots.



OUR LOCAL ANTI-WASTE CAMPAIGN.

Tourist: What a frightfully dangerous spot! Why ever don't they erect a warning

Local: Well, they 'ad one up fer some time, mister, but nobody fell over, so they took it down, as they 'ad a better use fer it.

said the disturber. The editor looked up and

gasped.
"I am," continued the unwelcome visitor, "a poet—not an ordinary poet, but a Nature poet."

"I've just told you that I can't see anybody,"

The editor became mildly interested. "Going to a fancy dress ball?" he inquired.

"Ah, so you've noticed them," beamed the poet, twirling round and round and admiring himself. Suddenly he stopped and produced a roll of manuscript from under his smock.

"I am, as I said before, a Nature poet, and, as a Nature poet, I assume the garb of those nearest to Nature."

"Very interesting, I'm sure, and must come in very handy for the garden," said the editor, looking at the roll of manuscript suspiciously.

"And here," continued the poet, flourishing the roll, "is some of my work. I will read you a few stanzas here and there."

Before the editor had time to protest, the

poet was off again.

"Perhaps I had better explain myself a little further before I actually read you these poetic pearls."

"Yes, perhaps you had." The editor looked

desperate.

"Well, I must tell you that my ideas are very advanced. My poetry might be described as neo-tripatic. There is no actual word sense, but the thought is conveyed to you by sound. For instance, this little pastoral on a farmyard—"He unrolled the manuscript and chanted in a droning voice:

" Quack quack, Čluck cluck,

Cockadoodledoo!

Neigh neigh, Bah bah, Moo moo moo!

moo moo :

We can see immediately before our eyes the little farmyard; and this:

Clank clank, Splash splash, Whirr whirr, Gronk! Splash splash, Clank clank,

Whizz whizz, Plonk!
You see that the pretty milk-maid getting water from the well is subtly suggested—"

With a wild look in his eyes, the editor rose from his chair.

"My dear sir," he said in a grim voice, "my young son, aged two and a half, has been reciting that stuff to me for a year already. Also I have a man downstairs who, though he can't write Nature poetry, can give fine imitations of the movements of animals. His speciality is the mule. I'll ask him to come up and show you— What! Must you be going so soon?"

The door slammed, and with a sigh of relief the editor resumed his seat,

and peace reigned once more.



"Now, sir, how old are you?" asked counsel of the witness.

"I was born in the year 1877."

"Come, come, that's too vague," said counsel.
"We want to know precisely when you were born."

"Very well, then, listen." (Speaking rapidly):
"I was born in the last month of the year, during the last week of the month, on the last day of the week, in the last hour of that day, in the last minute of that hour, and at the last second of that minute, and I think it's lucky that——"

Counsel: Phew! Stand down for a while.

LITTLE Margery wished to talk over the telephone with her mother, who was visiting a friend, so her elder sister gave her the 'phone number and let her call the Exchange,



REPRISALS.

"Before you fetch my lunch, George, I want you to understand I have joined 'The No Tipping Society."

"Very good, sir; and as you have been a good customer of mine, I ought to tell you that I, too, have joined a new union. We have arranged to pour hot soup down the necks of members of your society!"

It was such a lovely talk that Margery was impatient to hear her mother's voice again over the wire.

A few days after this conversation, when the mother was paying another visit to the same friend, the older sister overheard Margery at the telephone. Exchange evidently had been asking for the number, and Margery was explaining vehemently:

"Exchange, I want the number I had Thursday. Don't you understand? The same

number.

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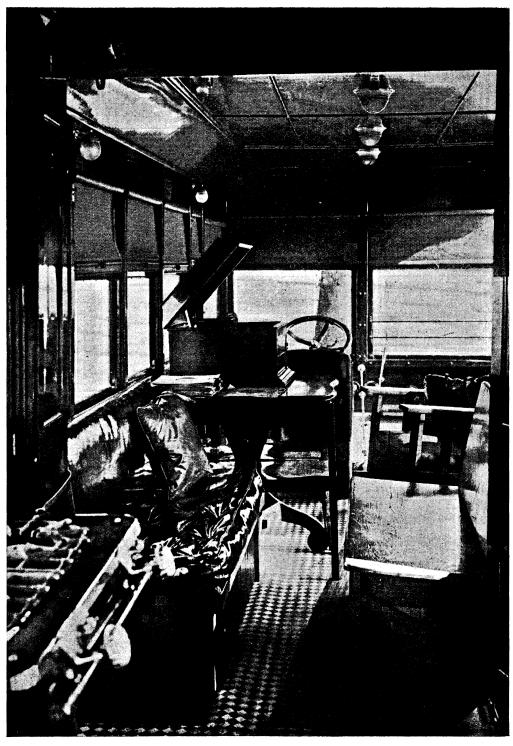
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CARAVANNING FOR A HOLIDAY: INTERIOR OF ONE OF THE LARGEST OF MODERN HOUSES ON WHEELS.

Photograph by Topical. See article on page 240 of this number.



"Lyveden himself was nowhere to be seen."

EX-PARTE MOTIONS

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "The Brother of Daphne," "The Courts of Idleness," "Berry and Co."

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

HE accident was inevitable.

Everybody present, except the driver of the green taxi, saw that. And he was so fearful lest the driver of the red omnibus should lose one withering participle of the apostrophe he had provoked, that he could not be bothered with the exigencies of traffic and the Rule of the Road.

Everybody, including Mr. Justice Molehill, shouted impotently; a small page, on his way to the post office, stood agonisedly upon one leg; and a moment later there was a splintering crash, the blue taxi shed a cabin-trunk and a suit-case on to the pavement, and then, after a paralysing moment of indecision, came heavily to rest against the panels of its aggressor.

Now, his lordship had no desire to become embroiled in a dispute which might easily

beget a *subpæna*. Still, because of his elevation to the Bench, he had not resigned the fellowship of Man, and, since he was the nearest individual to the blue taxi, he stepped to it quickly and opened the door.

A man of about sixty years emerged gratefully. His cassock and the purple about his hat argued him a prelate of the Catholic Church.

"Thank you so much . . . No, I'm not hurt at all. I sat still because—"

"Good Heavens!" cried the judge. "I know you." The other peered at him in the half-light. "My name's Molehill. We met at Rome—over a death-bed will."

The prelate started. Then recollection came twinkling into his gentle eyes.

"Of course," he said, putting out his hand. "I remember perfectly. Before the War. How very strange that——"

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"It's Fate," said the Judge excitedly. "Or Providence. For the last three months I've been racking my brain for your name, so that I could get into——"

"Forest," said the other.

Sir Giles Molehill slapped himself upon the thigh.

"That's right!" he cried. "Forest!

John Forest!

The presence of a rapidly increasing crowd and four constables at once discountenanced any further ebullition of glee, and emphasised the discretion of withdrawal.

The Judge thought rapidly.

"Look here," he continued, "my club's just over there." He nodded across the street. "If you'll wait a moment, I'll fetch the commissionaire. He can take charge of your luggage, and then, if you'll come in and have some tea with me, I shall be delighted."

"You're very good," said the other.

Mr. Justice Molehill hastened away. . .

Ten minutes later the two men were seated before a comfortable fire, absorbed in each other's conversation.

"That will," said the Judge, "which you and I witnessed in 1914 has never

been proved."

"That," said his guest, "is, I fear, my fault. At the present moment it's lying in a drawer of my writing-table at Rome."

"No?" cried his lordship, twittering.

Monseigneur Forest nodded.

"If you remember," he said, "after you and I had witnessed the old gentleman's signature, I took charge of it."

"That's right. You were going to take it to the British Consulate, to see if——"

"They'd stamp it. Exactly. Well, I was too late that day. I attended the next morning, and, after a little difficulty, they consented, for what it was worth, to put a seal on it. Then I went back to the hotel. When I asked whether the testator was still alive, they told me he'd gone."

"Gone?" cried the Judge incredulously.

"But the man was dying."

"Dying or not, he'd left for Paris that morning. To the amazement of the manager, he had quietly walked into the office, asked for his bill, and ordered a cab to be sent for and his luggage to be brought down. Apparently the doctor attending him had tried to protest, and had been sent away with a flea in his ear. I can only assume that the old fellow was subject to some violent malady, which comes and goes

suddenly, one of whose attacks he has

been warned will prove fatal."

"What an amazing thing!" said his lordship. "It never occurred to me that he would survive the night. However, as it happens, it doesn't affect the validity of that will. He's dead now. He died in 1917. But the will that was proved and is lying at Somerset House was made in 1910."

"You mean to say that the will we

witnessed supersedes it?".

"Undoubtedly."

The prelate covered his eyes.

"Dear me," he said. "Dear me. I blame myself very much. I should have sent the document after him, of course. His address was there. I quite intended to. But I had to leave for Vienna very suddenly upon the next day. Instead of the days I had expected, I was away for months. I only returned upon the eve of the explosion—"

"And, naturally, you forgot all about it. So did I. The merest accident brought

the whole thing to my mind."

"Accidents all the way," said the priest.

The Judge smiled.

"It looks like it," he agreed. "To be short, I came across the man in whose favour our will was made. Such a nice-looking fellow—obviously without a penny. Earning his living as a servant. Lyveden, his name was—Anthony Lyveden. Don't let me raise your hopes. I've lost him again—utterly. But everything's happening in the right order. It was no good finding him just to make his mouth water."

"But the other will," said his guest. "What about that? Haven't its provisions

been given effect to?"

"That," said Sir Giles, tapping him on the shoulder, "is the beauty of it. We're upsetting nobody. The other will leaves Lyveden every penny, provided he becomes a Knight."

"What an infamous condition!"

"There you have the story. Upon what he believes to be his death-bed, the old fellow repents his harshness. Recovered, our Pharaoh hardens his heart and lets the old will stand. 'The Devil was sick, the Devil a monk would be.'"

"De mortuis," said the prelate. "Besides, now we're going to canonise him, willy-

nilly."

"With any luck," smiled the Judge.

"Can you send for the document?"

Ruefully Monseigneur Forest shook his head.

"I must go for it," he said. "I must return at once. It's the least I can do. 'Without a penny,' you said? Poor fellow! I was going into the country to-morrow, to stay with my niece. that must wait."

"We haven't found him yet," said his lordship. "That may be the deuce of a business. Of course, now our hands are free. With the will located, we can advertise. I think, perhaps, though, we'd better wait till we've produced it to the solicitors."

The priest agreed heartily. Then he counted upon his fingers. After a moment's

calculation-

"I'm not as young as I was," he said, "but, if all goes well, I'll meet you here a week from to-day with the will in my pocket."

Tea and the comparison of notes upon matters of moment, other than the fortunes of Anthony, occupied another half-hour, when, after exchanging addresses, the two men parted, pledged to meet again in seven days' time.

The Judge walked home thoughtfully.

The queer little play was almost over. The strange human document which it had pleased him to piece together was almost whole. He found himself wondering why he had shown such solicitude. After all, who was this Anthony Lyveden? Why had he been at such pains to set this beggar upon horseback? Perhaps Fate had meant him to walk. . . . If she had, she was playing a curious game. Thanks to her efforts, the fellow's toe was practically in the stirrup. And he himself—Lyveden had no idea of it. .

Mr. Justice Molehill smiled.

It was really an entertaining little play. Until it was time for his entrance, the leading character would not even know that he was taking part. There he was-

The smile died suddenly, as the reflection

lost its savour.

Where? Where was the leading character? Supposing, when the time came, he could not be found. . . . Into what a dismal fiasco the play would turn. All his interest would have been thrown away. His solicitors would have been investigating a lost cause. Forest would have been sent packing back to Rome upon a fool's

Mr. Justice Molehill gnawed at his lower

lip.

There was no doubt about it. For some reason which, for all his prudence, he could not perceive, this Hecuba was a great deal to him.

His bewilderment may be excused. reason was out of his ken. The truth is, there was a ghost to be laid, and Fate had chosen him for the job. Judge or cornerboy, the man himself did not matter. The lot falling upon him, he had become in this adventure the particular agent of Fate.

King or herdsman, jester or sage, croupier or harridan-lend her what personality you please-Fate hath the reins and so the laugh of the universe. at its rump, her pricks are insensible alike to kicks or kisses. Folly, sceptre or rake in hand, she stands or sprawls upon Eternity, bending the ages to her whim. And we, poor things, at once her instruments and butts, stumble about her business, thinking it ours, setting each other up, bringing each other low, spoking each other's wheels, and all the time, wise in our own conceit, basking in the sunshine of our fine free-will, like lack-brains toasting their shanks before an empty cage.

A Napoleon is still-born; a Medici never survives his swaddling-clothes. Into the tiny graves are huddled a million destinies. The sexton's shovel smothers up a Renaissance; soon the daisies will blow above History. Those eyebrows are lifted, that lip curls, and two fair homes go down in sorrow. This man misses a train, to travel with Fortune in the one that follows. A horse is beaten on the post, and the frantic clerk who has backed it goes for five years to gaol. Five years . . . What are five years to Fate? A cable-operator nods over the Wheatstone, and a king loses his crown. A witness hesitates, and an estate passes to a Jacob and to his heirs for ever. . . .

And so the game goes on.

The living grains of sand go slipping and sliding into place in that gigantic hourglass, striving and fretting in their vanity, but always impotently falling towards that thin neck where days are numbered and the punctilious turnstile ushers to those mysterious marches where there is no more Time.

Look at them here.

Judge and maiden jostling a prelate—one upon either side—each of them in a toss about the same Anthony Lyveden, yet neither aware of the other's existence, and all four falling, while they fret, first into place and presently, one by one, towards that thin neck where days are numbered. . .

What? Have I whipped up a puppet

without advising you? Bear with me, sirs. 'Tis but the rustle of a gown—a silk knee against satin—upon the staircase. In another moment I shall have opened the door.

The more Monseigneur Forest thought upon the matter, so suddenly thrust smoking before him, the more uneasy he became. The kindest of men, he found the picture of the poor legatee fighting for existence when, but for another's remissness, he would have had a goodly heritage, inexpressibly distressing. Indeed, could he have started for Rome that night, he would have done so. But for the knowledge that

Here he was on his way to Hampshire, in response to a cry so instant that he had set everything on one side, and now, however sore her need of him, his niece, Miss Valerie French, would have to wait.

Blood might be thicker

than water, but the poor pinched ghost that



he was about to do all in his power to rectify the wrong, he could not have slept. As it was, the reflection that Anthony Lyveden had yet to be found worried him greatly. It was, of course, most unfortunate that the business had not cropped up before. blood. In the good man's eyes this stranger, Anthony Lyveden, had earned and must be accorded the privileges of the dead.

"Apparently absorbed in his work, he never so much as threw the newcomers a glance."

Directly he reached his hotel he sat down at his bedroom table and indited a letter.

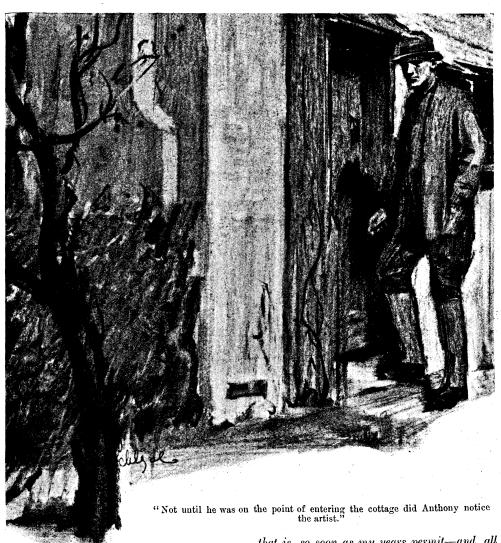
1st March, 1921.

MY DEAR VALERIE,

I am, as you see, in London.
Till an hour ago I was on my way to you.

distressed I am that I must keep you waiting, but, if I told you the case, you would be the first to hale me to the station.

I shall return straightway to England--



Now I must leave again for Rome to-morrow morning.

By accident there has come to me the knowledge of a grievous wrong, for which I am largely responsible. This, mercifully, it may be in my power to repair. To attempt to do so, however, necessitates my immediate return in quest of a paper which none but I can procure.

You can guess, my dear, how very much

that is, so soon as my years permit—and, all being well: I shall be here again one week from to-day, and with you at Bell Hammer one week from to-morrow.

You did not tell me the nature of your trouble, so that I can offer no counsel; if, as I suspect, it concerns the man of whom you have already written to me, remember, for what it is worth, that my faith in him has never wavered from the moment you told me that he had won your love.

Your affectionate uncle, JOHN FOREST.

To the prelate who framed it that letter was the best he could do: to Miss Valerie French, who received it, it was a great disappointment: and to an eminent brain specialist, who had never heard of it, it was worth exactly three guineas.

"I should have come to you before," said Valerie, "but I was expecting my uncle, and wanted to ask his advice before I took such a step. But now he's delayed, and I can't wait any longer."

Sir Willoughby Sperm leaned forward and

picked up a pen.

"One moment," he said, taking a sheet from a drawer. "Now, then. What is the patient's name?"

"Major Anthony Lyveden, D.S.O.," said

Valerie. "L-Y-V-E-Ď-E-N."

The name was entered.

"Yes. Address?"

Valerie hesitated. Then-

"Gramarye, Chipping Norton," she said. The address went down.

" Age ? "

" I think about thirty."

" Wounded?"

"Not that I know of."

"When did you see him last?"

" Eleven days ago." "And before that?"

" Not for three months."

"And his demeanour had changed in the interval?"

" Exactly."

"Are you engaged to him?"

" No."

" Practically."

" And it was broken off?"

"I broke it off."

" Why ? "

"I suspected him of inconstancy."

"Did you tell him so?"

" No."

" And he?"

"He left the neighbourhood."

"That was three months ago?"

" Yes."

"Was your meeting eleven days ago accidental or by arrangement?"

"I visited him unexpectedly."

"In the hope of reconciliation?"

" Yes."

"How did he take it?"

" Most handsomely."

"The reconciliation was effected?"

" Yes."

"But his demeanour has changed?"

"Yes."

"In what way?"

"He seems infatuated with his work."

"To the exclusion of you?"

"Exactly. It's as if in the interval he'd become a priest, and, although he still loved me, he was no longer free."

'What is his work?"

"Restoring an estate—the place he lives at—Gramarye. It's a very large estate nearly all woods—and it's been entirely neglected for a number of years. He and some others, including the owner, are working to get it straight—re-making roads, building bridges, cutting down trees. sounds Quixotic, but I can see the fascination. Besides, he took the work of necessity. He's very poor."

"He seemed to consider himself devoted

to the service of the estate?"

" Exactly."

"Did he exhibit any one particular mental symptom?"

" He heard things which I could not hear."

"Did he say what they were?"
"Trumpets."

"Anything else?"

"When he heard them, his eyes-"

Valerie hesitated.

" Yes ?"

"-were the eyes of a fanatic."

There was a long silence, while the pen was busy upon the broad sheet. Then-

"He should be seen," said Sir Willoughby, "by a specialist without his knowing it. I can't go down. Later I may be of use. hope you won't need me. The obvious thing to do is to get him away. But, if you can't do that, no one can—peaceably. think you could try again?"

"I feel it would be waste of time," said Valerie. "You say someone should see him.

Can you tell me who to go to?"

"D'you know Dr. Heron ?" shook her head. "He assists me a lot. If he can go, I know of no one better. Would you like me to speak to him?"

" I should be very grateful."

Sir Willoughby pressed a bell. secretary, who answered the summons-

"I want to speak to Dr. Heron," he said.

In silence the girl withdrew.

Whilst the two were waiting, the physician

spoke very kindly.

"I'm not going to express any opinion, because it would be valueless. It's clear that there's something wrong, but I've seen so many recoveries."

" Which you have brought about," smiled Valerie.

"I can never do more than contribute. I can only advise. It is the executive that works the cure. That's why I'm so hopeful about Major Lyveden."

"The executive?"

"Such as the devotion of relatives."

"He has no relatives."

"Or, better still," said the doctor, "the love of a great-hearted lady." The muffled bell of a telephone interrupted. "Excuse me." He picked up the receiver. "Is that you, Heron? . . . Can you see a friend of mine this afternoon? . . . At four-thirty?" Sir Willoughby looked at Valerie with raised eyebrows. She nodded quickly. That'll do . . . Miss French. Miss Valerie French . . . A case in the country . . Urgent . . . She wants your report. won't say any more. She'll tell you better than I. Ring me up, if you like, before you go. Good-bye." He pushed the instrument away and turned to Valerie. "I'll have another word with him when you've told him your tale."

"Thank you so very much."

Having laid three guineas upon the table under the decent cover of a photograph frame, Valerie rose to her feet. Sir Willoughby rose also and passed to the door. As he held it open, he put out his hand.

Valerie took it and held it.

"Nobody could have been kinder," she said.

The physician smiled.

"Try not to worry," he said. "I haven't seen Gramarye, but I don't think she'll stay the course. Not if you set the pace . . ."

It was upon the following Sunday morning that, after considerable hesitation, Major Anthony Lyveden issued an order which he could well have spared. The instruction was addressed to the younger of his two carters, and was touching the roan and the dog-cart and a seven-mile drive. In a word, it had become expedient that Major Anthony Lyveden should go up to Town.

His employer had warned him that periodical visits to London would be found indispensable. For all his dislike of the world, Winchester had had to pay them from time to time. Now that the latter was gone from Gramarye, and Anthony reigned in his stead, the duty, when it arose, fell to his lot. Never relishing the idea, he would not have believed that it could become so odious. Ere it had taken shape, it loomed

vexatious. Looking it in the face, he found it repulsive. No recluse could have been more reluctant to leave his hermitage. Major Anthony Lyveden felt positively nervous.

Since he had been in charge the man had altered.

He, who in the old days had shouldered with a smile responsibilities which would have set his elders sweating with apprehension, found the light weight of Gramarye a fardel to make him stagger. This was out of all order. Had he lain sick for a month, the work would have gone as steadily. The truth is, he was investing the conduct of a waggoner's team with the nicety requisite to the control of a tandem of thoroughbreds. That Lyveden of all men in the world should make such a costly mistake showed that his nerves were hag-ridden.

For all his dread of it, however, the visit to London could not conveniently be postponed. The need of some of the items upon his little list of accessories had become urgent, imperilling the work upon the estate. A few hours in the Metropolis would be enough. He knew where to go. Two addresses in the City and another in Drury Lane would see the whole of his pilgrimage. . . .

With a sigh, the ex-officer had locked up the safe and, leaving the cold grey parlour, whence he administered, passed out of the echoing mansion into the careless frolic of

a fine March morning.

As he had expected, the younger of the two carters was in the stables, and Anthony gave his order without more ado. Then he whistled to his Sealyham and started for home

After a wild night the unrepentant winds were full of mischief. A monstrous dignity of fleecy clouds scudded undignified across the blue. The precious park became a tossing waste of woodland, teased into flurried liveliness, full of false starts and misdirection, instantly buffeted for every blunder and bellowing good-natured protests at every cuff. Respectable brown leaves chased one another down the tracks; dark sober pools slapped their confining banks; the steady flow of brooks faltered irresolute.

Nature herself being so roughly used, be sure that man and beast were plagued unconscionably. Anthony's hat was sent whirling, and his terrier's ears were flicked inside out at the first corner. Not that they cared—either of them—for the sunlight leapt with a joy that took the sting out of the horseplay and turned the edge of the devilment. The day was as good as a tonic. By the time they had sighted their cabin the

two were revelling.

Not until he was on the point of entering the cottage did Anthony notice the artist. Seated upon the traditional camp-stool, the latter was sketching busily some twentyfive paces away. Apparently absorbed in his work, he never so much as threw the newcomers a glance, and Lyveden was more than half minded to let him be. however, thought differently. Even as his master turned to the door, there was a low growl, and a moment later the Sealyham was baying the intruder as if he had been a convict.

Calling the dog sharply, Lyveden ad-

vanced to apologise.

The lazy brown eyes hardly looked at him, and the slender fingers never left their work for an instant; but a pleasant smile leapt into the stranger's face, and, ere the apology was voiced, he spoke with the

utmost good humour.

"Please don't scold him. He's perfectly I'm a trespasser and a vagabond. I have no visible means of subsistence, and, if these things are crimes, I'm an habitual criminal. If you really don't want me to draw your cottage, I'll stop. But you must say so right out. And it isn't the cottage so much as the background I'm after. To be frank, this looks a promising place. I'm out for woodland—something that's not too tidv.'

Anthony smiled grimly.
"Orderliness," he said, "is hardly our forte at present. The park's been Nature's playground for over a century, and she's made the most of her time."

"You sound," said the other, "as if you had authority. Am I free of the place, or

not?"

For a second Anthony hesitated. Strangers were not to his taste. was, however, a quiet, careless indifference about the fellow's manner which was reassuring. Moreover, he liked the look of him, there was nothing monstrous about his attire-he might have stepped off a golf course—and there was a kindly expression upon the intellectual face. Somehow the droop of a fair moustache subscribed to the suggestion of laziness which the eyes had put forward. Indeed, his whole demeanour argued the simple creed "Live, and let live."

Lyveden had just decided to give the required encouragement when the other

knocked out his pipe.

"That's all right," he said lightly. "I never take offence. And I'm a rare believer in privacy. If I had a place in the country, I should have a ten-foot wall about it and a guard-room at every lodge. It's not that I'm a misanthrope, but to my mind there's not much point in ownership if you don't-

"I expect you'd issue some passports," said Anthony. "Any way, please don't go. And, if Gramarye's what you want, you're free to come and work whenever you like. Nobody'll say anything to you; but if they did—I'm going to Town to-morrow—my name's Lyveden, and I'm the-the agent

"You're very good," said the artist, and, with that, he filled his pipe and set

to work again.

Anthony went about his business.

By the time he had washed Patch, the

stranger was gone.

Dusk was falling ere Lyveden saw him again-a tall, thin figure striding up the track from the depths of Gramarye. As he passed the cottage, the ex-officer hailed him, offering to house his paraphernalia for the After a moment's hesitation the other accepted. . . . With the interior of the cabin he was plainly delighted, pointing his host a score of engaging features which only an antiquary would have recognised. Anthony gave him some tea, and the two sat smoking for the inside of an hour.

At length the artist rose.

"I must get back to Girdle," he said.

"About two miles, isn't it?"

"About that. I won't say 'Good-bye.' If Gramarye suits you, perhaps I shall see you again."

Thanks to your laisser passer, you may. I want to get on to Woodstock, really; but your woods are worth a day or two. Good

night."

He swung off into the darkness, and a minute later Anthony heard his steps upon

the metalling of the London road.

It was upon the following afternoon that Lyveden swore under his breath. At the time in question he was standing in a large efficient-looking shop which smelt strongly of cordage and was situate in Drury Lane.

The manager was nervously apologetic. "They've bin on order a week now, sir, but I can't honestly say as I expects them under three. You know what labour is now. In the ole days it was a matter o' 'phonin', an' hanythin' you liked 'd be 'ere by special messenger in 'alf an hour. But now. . . . "

He threw up his hands helplessly.

"Where else can I try?" said Lyveden.
The man mentioned two or three stores

each of them in the City.

"But I don' think you'll get 'em, sir. You might get an hodd one, but 'alf a dozen o' 'Lightnin' 'mattocks at the moment is worth their weight."

With a sigh Anthony bowed to the

inevitable.

"There's my address," he said, handing the man a slip of paper. "Send me a card the moment they come in."

"I'll set six aside for you, sir."

"All right."

He paid for the goods he had purchased, had them placed in a taxi, and drove to

Paddington.

He was so ridiculously glad to see the station again that the ordinarily provoking discovery that he had lost the "return" half of his ticket but twitched the hem of his temper. With a rueful smile he determined to deduct the price of his carelessness from his next week's wages.

The fact that he had broken no bread since breakfast never occurred to him. His one idea was to get back to Gramarye. Not that the dreaded visit had proved exacting. Indeed, as was to be expected, London had roared as gently as any sucking dove. It was with no true sense of relief that he watched the bustling platforms recede. Them and their fellows, the streets, he bore no grudge. Hideously crowded as they were, he felt almost kindly disposed towards them. He could afford to be magnanimous. He was on his way back. An hour or so, and he would stand once more under the grateful shadow of his sanctuary. . . .

He had no newspaper, nor any need of The flitting landscape, the regular pounding of the wheels were declaring tidings precious beyond price. A hundred times he wished the compartment empty save for himself, that he might have exulted openly. As it was, he was reduced to hugging himself surreptitiously, to staring upon the window and winking at his elusive reflection, which he could dimly focus in the stout pane. After a while he became pitiful of his fellowtravellers. As like as not, poor devils, they thought they were well off. And here beside them sat one who was bound for Gramarye. Anthony hugged himself anew. Then another station flashed by, before his feverish eyes

could read the name, to set him twittering with speculation . . .

By the time the train steamed into Chipping Norton, the ex-officer was trem-

bling all over.

To Patch, who had spent the day in the wood-shed, his master's return to the cottage was the signal for an undisguised explosion of ecstasy. Herein, as the noise of the roan's hoofs died away, he was unexpectedly joined by Anthony, and for a long two minutes the two wallowed in a pure paroxysm of glee.

It is to be noted, however, that while the terrier presently dispatched a generous supper with every indication of relish, his master left his untasted. Of the cold well-water the latter was undeniably glad, drinking great draughts and presently drawing more and washing luxuriously. Then he drew more and drank again, but he could touch no food. Neither, tired as he was, could he sit still before the fire . . .

Two hours later he stumbled across his threshold like a drunken man. Another draught of water revived him somewhat, and, after resting a little in the Windsor chair, he mounted the tiny staircase and

went shakily to bed.

* * * * *

Eight days later the artist with the lazy eyes rose from his leather-topped table to greet Miss Valerie French.

Handing her to a chair, he resumed his seat, and, after a word or two upon the weather, turned straight to the point.

"I saw Major Lyveden for the first time last Sunday week. We met in the morning, and he gave me tea the same afternoon. The next day he went up to London—on business of some sort—but I saw him on Tuesday and again on Friday and Saturday.

"I don't propose to trouble you with technical terms. All the same, it's not always possible for a medical man to render his language literally into the King's English. Now and again I shall give you rather a free translation, so you mustn't hold me too tight to anything I may say. I tell you this, because I'm going to state facts and not hand you mere expressions of opinion."

Valerie nodded intelligently, and the

speaker cleared his throat.

"Now, Miss French, one thing is manifest. If Major Lyveden remains at Gramarye, he will lose his reason." The doctor paused, and for the first time Valerie noticed the sober, methodical tick of a grandfather's clock. This, so far from spoiling, served to

enrich the silence, investing the latter with an air of couchant dignity which was most compelling. "He is at present the prey of certain malignant forces—the more immediate of them natural; some, I believe, unnatural—and nothing short of his removal from where he is now can set him free. I'm not certain that even removal will be entirely effective. But it's obviously the first step.

Listen. At the village inn I picked up a lot of news. All sorts of rumours are current—all touching Gramarye. Most of them are nonsense, and I won't repeat them. Others are founded on hard fact. Have you heard of a Colonel Winchester?"

Valerie nodded.

"Major Lyveden spoke of him as his employer."



"'Now, Miss French, one thing is manifest. If Major Lyveden remains at Gramarye, he will lose his supposing he

If a man is down with malaria, the first thing to do is to get him out of the swamp."

Valerie was very pale, but her voice did

"And supposing he won't leave . . . ? "

"He must be taken away-forcibly.

"That's right. He owns the estate, and was the working manager of this restoration business."

" Was?" breathed the girl.

"Was. Three weeks ago he went mad." Valerie started violently. "It's said that he tried to kill Lyveden. That I can't answer

for, but he's in a private asylum for dangerous lunatics."

There was a painful silence. Then—

"Is—is it the place?" said Valerie faintly.

The specialist rose to his feet and started to pace the room.

"As a doctor, I ought to say 'No': as a man who has spent the inside of a week there, I'm moved to say 'Yes.' Surroundings

reason.' . . . Valerie was very pale, but her voice did not tremble. 'And won't leave . . . ?'"

can depress or elevate, of course. That's common knowledge. But there's something more than that here. In the village they told me the place was accursed. Nonsense, of course. Yet. : . . Honestly, Miss French, I don't know how to tell you. . . . There's — there's a dreadful sinister attraction about

the park: there's an unearthly magnetism about the woods—a queer, wistful fascination about the wilderness. At Girdle they swore it was birdless. It may be. There are such places. I certainly saw neither bird nor beast while I was there. And that's not natural. But it's not what you see and hear: it's what you feel. It's terribly hard to explain, but the place appeals most powerfully to the emotions. You feel an irre-

sistible impulse to go to Something's assistance. Of course my eyes were skinned, so I saw the treachery. But I felt the appeal." He halted and threw out a hand. "Imagine a serpent disguised as a beautiful woman in distress-that's Gramarve. And if I'd been there a month, instead of a week . ." He stopped suddenly, like a man whose tongue has run away and made a fool of its governor. "And now please forget what I've said. It doesn't affect the case. I went down to see whether there was reason to fear for Major Lyveden's sanity. I've found that there is. And I advise that he be taken away forthwith."

"To a home?"

"A private house would be better. If it became necessary, he could be moved. But he shouldn't be allowed to have an inkling that his mind is in danger."

"I'd be thankful to have him at Bell

Hammer."

"Your home?"

"Yes," said Valerie.
"In Hampshire."

The doctor resumed his seat and crossed his legs.

"You're prepared to undertake it?" he said. "I mean, it may be a very trying responsibility."

"Dr. Heron, I hope to become Major

Lyveden's wife."

The specialist nodded. "Good. Do you wish me to arrange his removal?"

"Oh, please."

"Very well. Have you a closed car?"

" Yes."

"Any brothers?"

Valerie shook her head.

"Why, doctor?"

"Because," said Heron, "he will resist. It doesn't matter."

"I've two friends who will help me."

"Young strong men?"

Valerie shivered.

" Yes."

"Can you trust your chauffeur?"

"Implicitly."

"Good. Now let's see." He turned the page of a diary and then returned it. "Today's Tuesday. I don't want to waste any time, but we can't rush things. Please have a room at Bell Hammer ready on Friday. I'll arrange for two nurses to go to you that afternoon. I shall go back to Girdle tomorrow evening. I hope I shall want your two friends and the chauffeur with the car during the week-end, but I may have to wait. In any event, I shall wire to you at Bell Hammer, giving them twenty-four hours' notice and telling them where to come. Please tell the chauffeur to have enough petrol and spares to go from Girdle to Hampshire without a break."

"Is that everything?" said Valerie.

"Almost. There's just this. We ought to arrive by night; but I want you to leave all instructions and go to bed:"

"I can't do that, doctor. I'll promise not

to appear until you send for me, but—"
"That'll do. That's what I want. Don't
think I'm being professional. Remember,
I've taken Sperm at his word, and spoken
more frankly to you than ever I've done
in my life."

"I'm more than content," said Valerie.
"You and Sir Willoughby have been just

wonderful."

"That's the epithet he and I keep for you, Miss French." They rose and shook hands. "And since of your amazing self-control you've asked no questions, I'll make you a present of an answer. In my opinion, he will recover completely."

Valerie caught her breath sharply, began to tremble violently, and then burst into tears.

Order means much to me, gentlemen. Indeed, I believe in the dame. To fall foul of her ruling does not like me at all. Unless, however, I am to play the diarist, there are times when I have no choice but to retrace my steps. This is one of them. Four windy

days must be clapped back on to the hasty calendar—four days, sirs, of which three do not matter, while the fourth, or first—whichever way you look at it—concerns us mightily. In a word, it was upon the eleventh day of March that poor Mr. Slumper was also among the prophets.

66, Bedford Row, London, W.C. 11th March, 1921.

DEAR SIR,

Anthony Lyveden Esq.

We understand that this gentleman was recently in your service.

We have to make to him a communication of the utmost importance, and one which it will be to his great advantage to receive.

Since, however, we have already addressed to him one letter c/o yourself, to which we have had no reply, and since we have reason to believe that he has quitted your service, we shall be much obliged if you will be so good as to inform us where he may now be found, or, failing that, the address to which he proceeded on leaving your house. If you should be unable to give us this information, we shall be grateful for any suggestion you may be in a position to make as to the probability of his present whereabouts.

We are, dear sir, Yours faithfully, BULRUSH & Co.

John Bumble, Esq., The Shrubbery, Hawthorne, Hants.

Mr. Slumper was in the act of preparing to fold the letter before inserting it in the envelope which he had carefully addressed, when he saw the words "Anthony Lyveden."

For a moment he stared at them. Then, glancing furtively round, for it was no business of his to read the letters for whose dispatch he was responsible, he subjected

the sheet to a hurried perusal.

What he read excited him. There was no doubt about that. In a moment his nerves were at leapfrog. Fingers and lips and eyelids all flickered and fidgeted in a manner painful to see. Twice he half rose from his chair, only to sink back upon the edge, twittering . . . Here was an intention with no drive behind it. The truth is, the back of Mr. Slumper's will was broken in twain.

The exact moment at which the fracture had occurred cannot be stated with any certainty. A sentence of three months' imprisonment in the second division was not

responsible. The smash was before that. Probably it came with the realisation that he stood beneath the shadow of the Criminal Law. Be that as it may, the ex-financier emerged from prison a broken man. But for the interest of Mr. Blithe, the senior partner of Bulrush & Co., who had had him met at the gates and straightway sent him for a month to the seaside, poor Mr. Slumper must have sunk like a stone. When he was fit to follow an occupation, he was encouraged to accept a living wage, the work of an office-boy, and a tiny room to himself. . . .

Here, then, it was that Mr. Slumper was

doing battle.

How much it cost the poor sinner to pick up the letter, emerge from his closet, and make his way upstairs to Mr. Blithe's antechamber will never be known. That it reduced his overdraft in Heaven goes without saying. Curiously enough, the penetration of the barrier erected upon the obnoxious personality of a managing clerk proved a less formidable business than Mr. Slumper had expected. The very truculence of the fellow stung the derelict to a sudden defiance. This was but a flash in the pan—yet enough for a bully . . . After a moment's delay, Mr. Slumper was admitted into the senior partner's room.

Blithe looked up with a kindly smile.

"Yes, Mr. Slumper? You want to see me?"
All his nervousness returned with such a rush as to make the ex-financier break into a sweat. But he found his voice somehow, and fell a-wondering who it was that was

speaking his thoughts.

"If you please, sir. It's—it's about this letter." He laid the sheet upon his employer's table. "I was—thanks to your goodness—addressing the envelope. I take a great interest in the work, sir: and I don't, of course, read the letters, except to obtain the addresses. But the heading of this one, sir, happened to catch my eye. The name being familiar, I took the liberty of reading the text. And—and—I'm very loth to step out of my place, sir, but, if you are seeking the whereabouts of a footman called Lyveden, sir, Anthony Lyveden, I hardly think there can be two of that name. I mean. "

The solicitor smiled encouragingly. "Go on, Mr. Slumper," he said. Mr. Slumper moistened his lips.

"It will seem strange to you, sir, but he —if it is he—was in my service last summer." He passed a trembling hand across his mouth, "He left me right at the last. He

was very good to—to us . . . And I used to wonder sometimes what had become of him—he was a gentleman, you know. And then I saw him again . . ."

Blithe leaned forward.

" Yes ? "

"Last Monday, sir. At Paddington Station. I had the pleasure of fetching a bag for you, sir, from the cloakroom that afternoon." (It may be mentioned that this particular commission should have been executed by the commissionaire attached to the office. As, however, it was raining at the time, that gentleman and the managing clerk aforesaid had seen no good reason why "old Slumper" should not satisfactorily perform the duty and save his betters a wetting. Both paid for their blindness in due season. The principal was dismissed, with the result that, after a heated argument, the accessory before the fact was hit first upon the nose and then upon the left eye with all the principal's might.) "He was having some luggage labelled to go with him by train. There seemed to be some question of over-weight. I was quite close to him. Indeed, it was hearing a voice I knew that made me look at him. I heard him say, 'I'm going to Chipping Norton and on to Girdle.' I very nearly spoke to him, but . . .' "You're quite sure it was he, Mr. Slumper?"

"Oh, yes, sir. I've no doubt at all."

"Splendid," said Blithe. "I'm extremely obliged to you. I shall write to Girdle at once. If, as I verily believe, you've found us our man, we shan't forget it. Of course I'll let you know as soon as I hear." The speaker rose to his feet. "So you're getting on all right, are you? I'm so glad. And keeping fairly well? That's right. Come out this way." He opened a private door. "Good morning, and thank you so much."

With a full heart Mr. Slumper passed

humbly down the stairs . . .

Within the hour another letter came to his desk for direction. This he read without any hesitation. Indeed, the pleasurable glow of achievement which it induced ushered a gleam into the dull brown eyes such as they had not known for many a day.

CONFIDENTIÁL.
66, Bedford Row,
London, W.C.,
11th March, 1921.

DEAR SIR,

We have reason to believe that a gentleman of the name of "Anthony Lyveden" is residing in your neighbourhood. We are anxious to obtain his address in order that we may make to him a communication of the highest importance, and one which it will be to his great financial advantage to receive.

If you can furnish us with his address by return of post, we shall be greatly obliged; but, if you are unable to do so, kindly cause immediate inquiries to be instituted with a view to locating him, and advise us accordingly.

Our information is that Mr. Lyveden left London for Chipping Norton en route for Girdle on Monday last, the 7th inst.

Yours faithfully,

Bulrush & Co.

S. Plowman, Esq., Solicitor, Girdle, Oxon.

If to be told that the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division of the High Court of Justice will be prepared to award you a mansion in Town, an estate in Dorsetshire —each of them, as they say, ready to walk into—and nearly three-quarters of a million of money, is to receive a communication to your great financial advantage, then Bulrush and Co. had not overstated their

There was no doubt about it. Anthony's The pilot was going ship was signalled. aboard. Very soon the galleon would be in the stream.

If the double journey had proved too much for John Forest, so that the prelate was compelled to rest before returning to England, at least he had sent the will by registered post. This in due season had been produced to the testator's solicitor, a benevolent gentleman of the Old School, who, after an interview with Sir Giles Molehill and Blithe at the Royal Courts of Justice, was entirely satisfied regarding its validity. Indeed, his anxiety to wash his hands of the usurper was almost voluble.

"And I may say, my lord, that I more than once spoke very warmly to my client about that iniquitous proviso which he made But, as your lordship knows, me insert. a testator has always been permitted to indulge his utmost eccentricity, and my words fell upon deaf ears. He was a difficult man, sir, was Jonathan Roach. But when the time came, and I had to break the news to young Lyveden, it was a sorry business I'm heartily thankful it's going to be put right."

"I hope it is, Mr. Orphan," had replied the Judge. "But we've still got to find our protegé. That I must leave to you and Blithe to pull off. I've done my part, But

you must keep me informed, for I'm determined to be in at the death."

promised two attorneys had faithfully, and left the Judge smiling. Benevolence and shrewdness seldom go hand-in-hand, and his lordship's words had contained a subtle instruction to Blithe to shepherd his elderly brother and not to retire from the case. The flick of an eyelid had disclosed Blithe's reception of the hint.

With what result, we know.

And that is the sum of my arrears, gentle-Henceforth, if you please, you shall find the street of narrative straight as a French highway, with hill and dale certainly, but none of your hairpin corners to send you doubling upon your tracks.

It was eleven o'clock of a Sunday morning. Never was an hour more melodiously announced. The diverse tongues of Oxford insisted upon its arrival for fully five minutes. Indeed, the harmonious argument, which had begun as his lordship's car was nearing Magdalen Bridge, was still in progress when the great grey limousine swung out of St. Giles's and on to the Woodstock

All three of its occupants were in a holiday humour. The Judge was radiant; Orphan proved splendid company; while Blithe, a brilliant talker, kept the two bubbling with merriment upon a fire of delicate wit. The miles fairly melted beneath their gaiety. Indeed, it was not until the Judge's eye caught the message of an odd finger-post that any one of the three realised that they had passed Blenheim.

"ĈHIPPING NORTON 8!" cried his lordship. "Gad, gentlemen, we're nearly there. Blithe, you're a stage-manager in a million. The thing's going to pan out like a wellwritten play. What time did you tell

Plowman to expect us?"

"At twelve o'clock," said Blithe. "With

any luck we shall just do it nicely."

"Good!" said the Judge. Then: "I think we'd better pick up Plowman and take him with us, don't you, Orphan ? ''

"I think so. For one thing, he knows

Lyveden and can introduce us."
"Quite so." His lordship consulted his watch. "We ought to have landed our fish by a quarter to one. We'd better mark down an hotel and carry him off to lunch. You'd better speak to him first and just make sure he's our man."

"Certainly," said Orphan. "I think if I ask him his mother's maiden name, where

he was born, his age, and the name of his uncle's butler, that ought to do."

"Why the name of the butler?" said Blithe. "Is that a catch?"

"Quite right," said Orphan. "Just to make doubly sure. Old Jonathan Roach never would have a man-servant in the house. It was a whim of his. If I get the right answer, I shall be easy for ever. But I don't want to take any risks with the best part of a million at stake."
"I agree," said Sir Giles. "Have you got

some cash for him?"

The other nodded and touched his coat. "One hundred in notes and a chequebook. I'll take his specimen signature, and put a thousand to his credit to-morrow.'

"Good!" said the Judge. "That's the style. I wish poor Forest was here. He'd 've enjoyed it thoroughly. Such a pathetic letter he wrote me when he sent the will. Blames himself out of all reason for keeping the document so long. I sent him a line on Friday to say that we'd found our man. I admit it was rather precipitate, but, all things considered, I think I was justified. By the time the letter reaches him it will be a fait accompli—and I wanted to ease his mind."

"If you ask me," said Blithe, "it's all over but the shouting. The talk I had with Plowman over the telephone settled it. In fact, that was when the shouting began. Which reminds me that the trunk line from London to Girdle requires attention. It was not a conversation at all. It was a

joint rhapsody.'

"Personally," said the Judge, "I detest the telephone. It's a pomp and a vanity of a wicked world. You can never be sure who you're talking to, nor how many people are listening; there's no record of what you've said and no evidence that you've even said it. The invention is a convenient nuisance, conducive to blasphemy, and should be abated."

The car rolled on.

Presently, though none of them knew it. they slipped past Anthony's cottage and so down Gallowstree Hill to the village

they sought.

To say that Mr. Samuel Plowman was ready and waiting in no way describes his condition. The little lawyer was wellnigh beside himself with expectation. prospect of meeting a Justice of the King's Bench intoxicated. The possibility of entertaining such a one in the flesh and the dining-room of The Nook, Girdle,

made tales of Paradise seem tame. burning discussion with Mrs. Plowman had resulted in a decision not to offer his lordship lunch. That would be attempting too much. Cakes and ale, however, flanked by a dish of sandwiches and a tantalus, made a collation at once independent of service and adaptable to every appetite. Furniture was moved, rugs were transferred, the first floor was spoiled to turn the spare bedroom into Mr. Plowman's conception of a Judge's lavatory. It had been mutually agreed that Mrs. Plowman's presence would be intrusive, but, in the circumstances, to go soberly to Church was more than the good lady could stomach. An O.P. was therefore established in the bathroom beside the geyser, to which point of vantage Mrs. Plowman undertook to repair the moment the car was heard. . . .

The Nook standing close to a corner of the London road, seven times was the O.P. occupied and evacuated between half-past eleven and twelve, and three times did Mr. Plowman actually throw open his door and advance, nervous but beaming, into the drive, only to hear the deceitful engine once more gathering speed. The fourth time, however, the purr of the engine fell to a steady mutter, which was maintained. The car was not at the gate, but it was not moving. Possibly its occupants were inquiring for The Nook. . . . Mr. Plowman tried not to run down the drive. With her heart in her mouth, Mrs. Plowman peered past the geyser to where the branches of a monkey-puzzler maddeningly obstructed her view of the front gate. . .

Two minutes later the little solicitor reappeared, walking most delicately and attending a tall, distinguished-looking man with every circumstance of veneration. Behind them came two other strangers, who might have been equerries. for all his ecstasy, Mr. Plowman remembered to threw a smile up to the bathroom window, literally reduced Mrs. Plowman to

tears of joy.

It was no desire for refreshment, but pure kindness of heart that moved Sir Giles Molehill to accept the attorney's invitation. And, as was his way in life, he did the thing handsomely. Did he see beer? Splendid. He would have a bottle of beer. Yes, and a sandwich. Excellent. Just the thing after an eighty-mile run. What excellent roads they kept in Oxford-He never remembered better. And the Cotswold air was magnificent.

Really, one had to spend one's days in a stuffy Court in Town to appreciate the

country as it deserved.

"Yet we thrive on the atmosphere, bad as it is. Look at the time we live, Mr. Plowman. Who ever heard of a Judge dying? Yes. I really must have another sandwich. They're so excellent. And now we want you to come with us in the car and take us to Mr. Lyveden . . . Major Lyveden, is he? Right . . . D.S.O.? Good fellow. Wonder what he got that for. And then you'll come on to lunch . . ."

By the time they were back in the car, Mr. Plowman was upon the edge of praying for an occasion of saving his lordship's life at the expense of his own

At the south-west corner of Gramarye the guide gave the signal, and the car was stopped. Then Plowman and Orphan alighted and passed up the wasted track. Except for a wreath of smoke curling from the chimney, the cottage might have been deserted. . . .

"I rather expect," said Plowman, "he'll be having his dinner. . . . "

A second later he was tapping upon the door.

For a moment there was a dead silence. Then a stealthy movement made itself heard. . . .

The two men listened intently.

From the London road the Judge and Blithe were watching them closely.

The door remaining fast shut, Mr. Plow-

man knocked again.

Instantly the movement ceased. After perhaps twenty seconds it was renewed, but with a difference. The stealth had become hasty.

The two men stared at one another.

rnen-

"Better go in," said Orphan, with his hand on the latch.

This yielded to pressure, and the next

moment the door was open.

The atmosphere prevailing in the little chamber was uninviting. There was a fire glowing upon the hearth, and the room was unpleasantly hot. From the reek of a pungent tobacco emerged an unsavoury smell of something which was not fuel, burning. Scattered about the red-brick floor were black feathers without number, and here and there amid the plumage appeared the muddy print of feet. Perched upon the logs was a pot bubbling, and by the side of the hearth an old pair of boots

emitted wisps of steam. Lyveden himself was nowhere to be seen.

Plowman looked round wide-eyed, and Orphan blew disgustedly through his nose.

The former raised his voice.

"Major Lyveden," he called, smiling, "may I come in?"

There was no answer.

The two conferred in a whisper. Then Plowman cleared his throat.

"Major Lyveden!" he called. "It's Plowman speaking—Plowman, of Girdle. Can you spare me a moment?"

Still no reply was vouchsafed.

Followed by the other, Orphan advanced into the room and looked behind the door. There was no one there.

"Must be upstairs," he said shortly

He stepped to the foot of the flight and spoke upward.

"Is Major Lyveden there?"

For a moment it seemed as if he, too, was

to go unanswered. Then-

"Nao," said a voice thickly, "'e ain't. 'E's gorn aout, 'e 'as. An' won' be beck till ter-morrer."

Orphan looked sharply at Plowman. The latter shook his head, frowning, as if in denial, and lifted his voice.

"Who's that?" he snapped.

Somebody was heard to swallow. Then— "I tell yer 'e ain't 'ere," said the voice. "'E's—'e's gorn aout."

"Who has?" said Orphan.

"Majer"—the speaker hesitated—

" Majer Dibdin."

The hesitancy alone would have proclaimed the impostor, and, while Plowman ran for the others, Orphan told the occupant of the bedroom, first that he was an infernal liar, secondly that he was being addressed by a magistrate, and thirdly that, unless he desired to be given into custody for stealing poultry and housebreaking, he had better descend forthwith and tell the whole truth.

As the Judge and Blithe came up, with Plowman behind them, Orphan stepped backwards out of the doorway.

"Come on," he said roughly. "Out in the air."

Barefoot, of his trepidation still grasping the carcase of what had been a black Orpington, there emerged from the cottage a filthy and evil-smelling tramp. A week's sandy stubble bristled upon his chin, the pendulous lips were twitching, the crafty eyes shifted uneasily from side to side.

The four lawyers stared upon the beastly

apparition in disgusted dismay.

The sickly smile of guilty embarrassment upon their vis-à-vis' face had begun to swell into the cringing leer familiarly precedent to an appeal for leniency, when the fellow leaned forward, stared fearfully at the Judge, and, dropping the pullet with a screech, recoiled against the wall.

"I ain't done no 'arm," he cried, whimpering. "I ain't done no 'arm. I never stole that there 'en. She were dead in the way, me lord. Runned over by a cyar, she were. I only come aout last Toosday, me lord, an' tryin' ter run strite an' git a good job o' work, like wot you said, sir. It's gauze trewth I never stole that there bird. She was layin'..."

Out of a bad business the queer recognition stood solitarily opportune. Rhadamanthus' own promise of clemency in return for the truth could not have been more effective. The plain facts, however, were

woefully bitter to hear.

The tramp had taken undisputed possession at eight o'clock that morning. The cottage was then empty. The fire was out and the bed in order. Upon the floor of the living-room lay the fragments of a pitcher, with the water which this had held settled in a pool upon the bricks. A Windsor chair was fallen, Dagon-like, upon its face, with its legs in the air. What no one could understand was the fact that the lamp, which hung from the ceiling, was still burning.

More or less recovered, but profoundly depressed, Monseigneur Forest reached

Hampshire upon the following Thursday. He had visited the Judge in London, and learned from his mouth first the news and then the details of the unpleasant truth. His lordship's contention that Fate was opposed to their endeavours, he found it difficult to dispute. Believing that he was on his way to a triumph, he had come breathless to participate in a rout. For three days he had dandled a new-born joy, to find it stark upon the fourth. . . .

Valerie was not at the station, but Mason was there with the car, and the poor man was glad to be alone. He was mourning a stolen opportunity to repair a great wrong, and would not be comforted. The lost legatee haunted him more tragically than ever.

As the car swept to the house, he noticed two girls upon the steps.

They were interrogating the butler.

Observing his arrival, they cut their inquiries short.

The prelate emerged, however, in time to hear the servant's concluding words.

"No, madam. Only that the improvement was maintained. Thank you, madam."

"Who's ill?" cried Forest sharply.

The butler inclined his head.

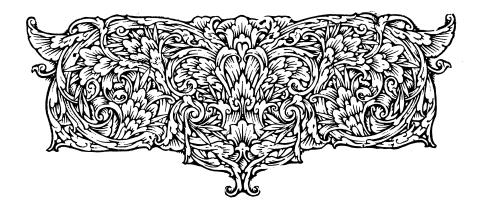
"Major Lyveden, sir—a friend of Miss Valerie's. He——"

" Who?"

For all his training, the servant jumped. "Major Lyveden, sir. Major Anthony Lyveden."

Monseigneur Forest looked round helplessly. Then he put a hand to his head and sat down on the steps.

The ninth story in this series will appear in the next number.



CARAVANNING FOR A HOLIDAY

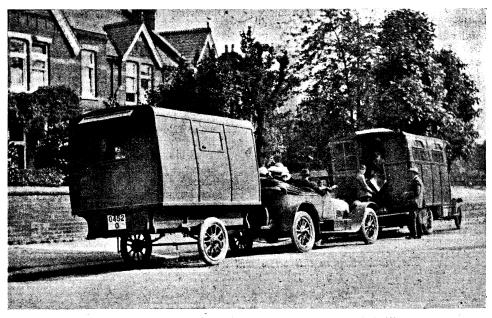
ITS ATTRACTIONS, EXPERIENCES, AND EXPENSES

DESCRIBED AND ILLUSTRATED BY CLIVE HOLLAND

ANY poets have sung of the joys of the open road and the gipsy life, of which one can catch the spirit in the pages of George Borrow and the poems of Robert Louis Stevenson; and And Stevenson cried-

Give the face of earth around, And the road before me.

Most town dwellers must have heard the call of the road at one period of their lives



A MOTOR CARAVAN, A TOURING CAR, AND A TRAILER CARAVAN.

Bliss Carman, the poet, has summed up in his verses "The Joys of the Open Road" what so many have felt who have gipsied or carayanned along it. He sings—

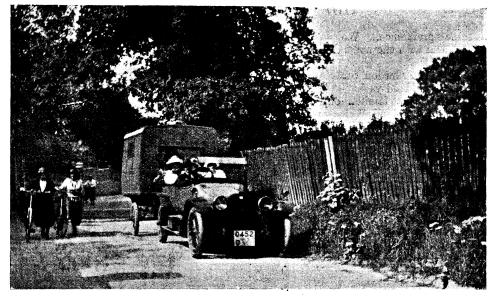
The joys of the road are chiefly these:

* * * *

A vagrant's morning wide and blue,
In early fall, when the wind walks, too:
An idle noon, a bubbling spring,
The sea in the pine-tops murmuring
The broad gold wake of the afternoon:
The silent fleck of the cold new moon;
The sound of the hollow sea's release
From stormy tumult to starry peace.

or another, and some many times, for there lies the Wanderlust in the heart of most of us. Happy are they who can answer it afoot, awheel, or in a caravan.

There is a lure about the very sound of the word "caravan"—a promise of "skies above" and wide-flung spaces, and of desert sands, and, in our own land, of trees and brooks, moorlands and hills, birds and their songs at dawn and dusk, of twilight and stars, of headlands and wide open bays, and seas calm and storm-tossed



A TRAILER CARAVAN DRAWN BY A CAR.

Hundreds of miles have slipped away beneath the wheels of caravans in which we have travelled along the highways and byways of the Southern and Home Counties and "The Heart of England."

Perhaps to enjoy caravanning to the full needs a touch of the true gipsy spirit, which lies dormant, did we but know it, in many of us. But we have known all sorts and conditions of caravan folk, from gipsies to millionaires, who seemed one and all

to have "heard the road a-callin'," and, in answering it, to have found peace and delight.

These are the days of motor traction—granted. But we ourselves have a sneaking liking for the older form of horse-drawn vehicle, with its leisurely progression, its sounds of the road, its picturesqueness. There are many, too, among the amateur gipsies of the Caravan Club; and those unattached to any organisation, who have



MEAL-TIME FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD.

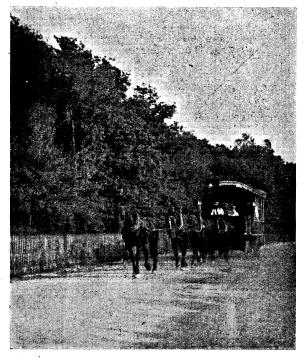
the same preference. We shall therefore deal with the horse-drawn

type of vans first.

The late Dr. Gordon Stables whose famous "land yacht," "The Wanderer," was a familiar object on the roads of England, Wales, and Scotland for a period of some forty years, until his death in 1910may almost be said to have been the father of caravan holidays. He was a naval man, and much preferred life in his van to life in a house, although he had a very charming residence at Twyford, in the garden of which lie buried some of the many dogs that were his pets and constant companions on his journeys.

"The Wanderer" was a fine saloon van, built to order, with a view to providing for most of the months of each year a home on wheels in which the owner and his family could live, and he himself could write the many books which bear his name. Even to-day, except in some minor details, perhaps, one could scarcely wish for or devise a better. It was 18 feet in

length, extreme breadth 6 feet 7 inches, and height from the road surface to top of roof 10 feet 8 inches. There was only one disadvantage—its size. It could not turn

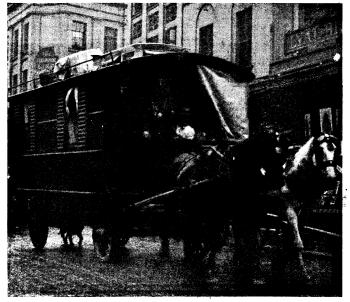


EXTRA HORSE-POWER FOR THE ASCENT OF A LONG HILL NEAR SEVENOAKS.

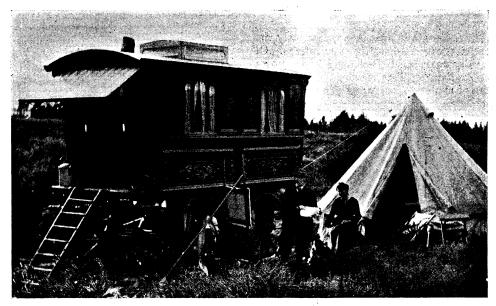
in a narrow or even an ordinary road, and, by reason of its height, it often touched overhanging trees and caused considerable trouble.

> Since Dr. Gordon Stables set out as an adventurer along the road, many thousands have enjoyed the pleasure of caravan holidays. And there are a number of types of vans, suitable for all requirements, from which to choose. They must be considered very briefly. They divide themselves, naturally, into one-horse vans and those requiring more than that number.

Of the first-named, a gipsy-like van such as is shown in some of the photographs here reproduced is excellent. It is light and generally very carefully planned as regards the utilisation of every inch of space. This will be anything from 8 feet to



A HORSE CARAVAN PASSING THROUGH A COUNTRY TOWN.



A LANDSCAPE ARTIST'S CAMP ON A MOOR, ON GRAVEL SOIL WITH A GOOD WATER-SUPPLY NEAR AT HAND.

12 feet over-all inside measurement, and from 6 feet to 6 feet 9 inches in width over-all outside measurement.

A medium-sized van of this kind will carry comfortably from four to five persons during the day. Of these, if of different sexes, and adults, three can sleep comfortably in the van. The two others will have to find accommodation at inns and cottages, or to sleep under canvas. A suitable tent of a readily stowable pattern can easily be carried for the latter purpose. If the party is formed of father, mother, and two young children, then all four can sleep in the van comfortably, the visitor

finding a bed out. Such a van is that shown in the photograph of an artist's camp on the moor. Several artists we know spend the whole summer in their caravans, moving from place to place as "the spirit moves them."

The chief advantages of vans approximating to the type under consideration are their lightness, general handiness, and comparatively low cost either to purchase or hire.

They can be drawn by one horse, except in very hilly country or up extremely steep hills, when additional horse-power should be requisitioned. They are large

enough for comfort, and yet there is no waste space. They are built on the pattern, gipsy which long experience has taught the gipsies to plan carefully, and are smart and pictures quelooking, and generally well ventilated. Their cost nowadays is from £200 to £350.

The other twoand three-horse vans which figure in some of our pictures are much more elaborate in



AFTERNOON CALLERS: HOUSEWORK AND HOSPITALITY COMBINED.

their fittings, and approach more nearly the Pullman car in appearance and fittings. Of such a type is Mr. L. Richmond's well-known "Arcadian." This is a well-thought-out van of moderate size, which is a comfortable

number sleeping out either in tents or elsewhere. Of course, such horse vans as we have just been describing are the acme of luxury, and are costly. The medium-sized vehicles of the Pullman type may cost anything

from £500 to £850, built of teak, or mahogany and steel, and only ordinarily well fitted. Some run into £1,000. Formerly they could be obtained for less than two-thirds that amount. There are several large vans on the road which have cost upwards of £2,000 each, and are mo st lux uriously planned and fitted.

However, few of these, if any, are for hire. They are the "land yachts" of their owners, and their mobile summer

homes.

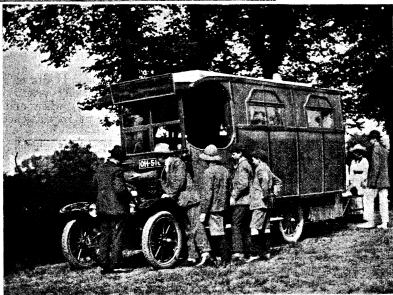


A HALT FOR REPAIRS : OLD STYLE.

living-room by day and a luxurious sleeping apartment by night. There are lounges on either side of the rear end of the van, forming excellent beds, and another bed is stowed away in the living saloon portion of the van under the sideboard.

The still larger type of Pullman vans are some of them capable of making up four and even five

good beds, the number depending somewhat on the composition of the party, and the ground plan. These vans will accommodate in the daytime from six to seven people comfortably, the extra



NEW STYLE.

There is, of course, opportunity in the fittings for the exercise of a good deal of personal ingenuity and taste, quite apart from that of the builders, or by the latter under one's own direction.



THE ARRIVAL OF THE MORNING MILK FROM A NEIGHBOURING FARM.

Indeed, a well-known caravanner of some years' standing told us only the other day that he was always adding improvements, chiefly space-saving devices and fittings. He has invented a most ingenious folding table of a perfectly rigid character,

which swings up into the roor out of the way when not in use, and is only about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick, legs and all, when folded.

For many people the motor caravan, or its most modern development, the "trailer" van, which can be attached to any touring car of 16 horse-power and upwards, and taken anywhere, presents many attractions. It is the more modern type of caravan holiday-maker who goes in for mechanical traction, and his tastes are only just being adequately catered for.

The motor caravans may be divided, at the present time, into motor vans proper

and vans "trailed" by cars.

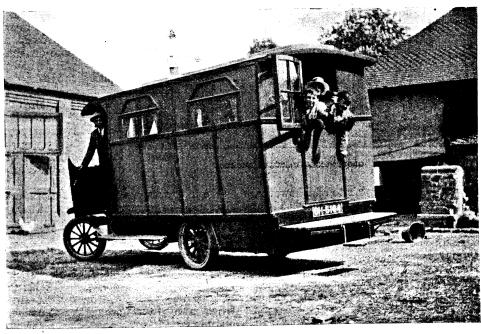
These two types—which are fully illustrated in our pictures—have their individual advantages. The motor caravan proper is (a) self-contained; (b) more substantial;

(c) can be much larger.

On the other hand, the "trailer" type of caravan is (a) handier; (b) much less costly; (c) avoids the expense of an additional licence; (d) enables one to live in a caravan, while one still has the use of its motive power (the car) for excursions and other purposes.

The last point is of considerable value.

We know owners of "trailer" vans who tow them down to suitable spots and fix them up. They can then use their cars for week-ends, returning to town or home at will.



READY TO START FROM A FARMYARD HALTING-PLACE.

The disadvantage of a motor caravan proper is that it is generally too cumbersome to use for merely running about, and it is a big job to get it cleaned up and ready for the road when one merely wishes to take a run of twenty miles or so to visit a point of interest.

The very big type of motor caravan, too, is a more cumbersome vehicle than a horse van of the same accommodation. It has to have a considerably longer and heavier

for the horse-drawn vehicle of approximate size.

The cost of the motor caravan varies very considerably, according to the chassis upon which it is mounted and the fittings. The smaller type of van can be had for about £450, and some of the larger cost £2,000 and upwards.

The Eccles "trailer" vans, for use with one's own car, which are gaining so great a popularity, vary in price from £175 to £275

and upwards. For the former figure one can get a wonderfully serviceable "trailer" in which four beds can be made up. It is a roomy van, made of waterproof canvas and lined inside with ornamental wood. £275 type is more luxuriously fitted, has interchangeable beds seats, is lined with satin walnut, and is completely fitted for the road, with lockers, larder, table, cooking utensils, tip-up lavatory basin, crockery, and even a looking-glass, and the whole of the utensils are fitted in rattle-proof compartments. One could not desire a more delightful home on wheels, and the ventilation of it has been made a special study.

Either of the two "trailer" vans we have described will carry comfortably six persons on the road, and run with astonishing smoothness and ease.

We have now dealt with the more practical side of caravan holidays. There is certainly no form of holiday capable of affording such pleasure and benefit as regards health, provided the Clerk of the Weather be only kind.

[Topical

A very important point is who is going a-gipsying. On no other kind of holiday, save possibly that spent on a yacht—when to get away from uncongenial companions one must jump overboard—is the composition of the party of holiday-makers so



Photo by]

A FAMILY GROUP ON A CARAYAN HOLIDAY

base board. It is only fair to add, however, that for continuous touring, and when long distances are to be covered in a short time, a well-appointed motor caravan cannot easily be excelled.

It may be anything from 11 to 20 feet in length or even more. The larger and heavier vans are usually made of teak, or mahogany, and steel, the lighter of three-ply and steel, or even three-ply and waterproof canvas. The fittings and accommodation are usually as described

important as when caravanning. Incompatibility of temperament, if it exists, will soon make itself felt, to the detriment of the enjoyment of everyone. One may not have to "rough it," but one must be prepared for ups and downs of the road, which try the temper, and in our strangely variable clime it will not always be fine. Therefore choose your companions and guests carefully.

Another important point is the campingplace. One cannot always, at the end of a day's journey, come upon the ideal spot, but one should look for one with the following qualifications at least—quietude, space, a good and plentiful supply of water, and the near-by possibility of shelter, for those who may be sleeping under canvas, in the event of a sudden break in the weather. There is an excellent type of tent which is compact when not in use, roomy, well ventilated, and rigid.

The vicinity of farmsteads generally provides suitable "pitches," and from the farms one can not only usually obtain one's



SITTING-ROOM IN A LARGE MODERN MOTOR CARAVAN.



Photo by] [Topical.

THE KITCHEN OF ONE OF THE LARGEST OF MODERN MOTOR CARAVANS.

milk supply, fodder, eggs and butter, but also get a joint cooked if required.

On caravan trips we have seldom met with boorishness or discourtesy in the matter of drawing in for the night into a park, field, or inn yard, and often, on the contrary, have received the utmost kindness.

But it is well to remember that the use of a field does not give the right to roam anywhere about the farm or grounds, nor to annex anything, even firewood, which one may need. Courtesy always pays a high rate of interest in this life, and the wise caravanner invests in some.

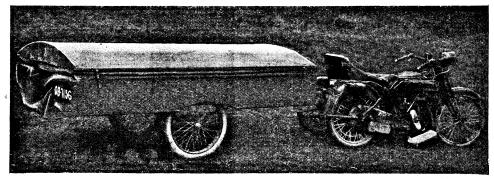
There yet remains the important matter of cost. It is far more difficult to estimate this nowadays than in pre-War times; but although a caravan holiday cannot be considered exactly a cheap one, it need not cost more than one spent in an hotel or good boarding-house at a fashionable seaside resort.

Vans can be hired either through the usual agents—the Caravan Club—which, we believe, keeps a register—or by watching advertisements in the Press. The cost per week naturally varies according to the kind and size of van. One of the gipsy type, drawn by one horse and accommodating a

party of four, can still be had—except in the month of August, when fifty per cent. should be added—for about three or four guiffeas a week, sometimes less. The larger vans, for a pair or three horses, carrying

£10 to £20, according to the class of van and the fittings.

The "trailer" type of caravans can sometimes be hired, but it is more usual to purchase them, and either garage for the



A LIGHT COLLAPSIBLE TRAILER CARAVAN ATTACHED TO A MOTOR-CYCLE AND SIDE-CAR.

six to eight persons, and sleeping four or five comfortably, will be from five to eight guineas per week.

The hire of horses, if one is going on from day to day, will come out at about five pounds a week, including the cost of keep.

The horses can, of course, be turned out at night to grass, except when staying in a town; but they cannot do the work called from them on grass alone, and underfeeding is a bad policy There will be all round. tips for permission to draw into fields and yards and when putting up at inns. These will run away with from thirty shillings to two pounds a week on the average. Running expenses should not be heavy with horse vans—say a pound a week, plus the cost of re-shoeing horses when necessary.

The hire of motor caravans is a different matter. The smallest, to accommodate, say, four people, and to sleep three—or, if there are two children, then the whole

four—will not be much less than seven pounds a week in August. The larger type of motor caravans, taking a party of from six to ten persons, and sleeping from four to six—according to the nature of the party—will cost for hire per week from winter or sell at the end of the holiday. If care has been taken of them, the latter can often be done with comparatively little loss. The petrol bill will be heavy or light according to the distance run and the consumption of the particular van per mile, but



A LIGHT COLLAPSIBLE TRAILER CARAVAN WHEN ERECTED.

Two photographs reproduced by permission of Mr. W. M. Bailey

it should not be greatly in excess of horse hire—certainly not double, unless a very considerable mileage per day is aimed at.

If a chauffeur is taken, then his wages must be added. He should be a good motor engineer, or repairs may mount up, as well as much trouble be experienced. The oil bill and tips will probably work out at about £3 a week.

It is difficult, of course, to estimate with any exactitude the total cost per head, because, naturally, so much depends upon the route chosen, the mileage covered (in the case of motor vans), the "ideas" of the party, the standard of living, the generosity of the tips given, and the kind of sleeping accommodation taken.

If one camps for a few days or a week at one place, the cost is naturally lessened.

It may be taken that, with a party of four in a one-horse van, £5 a week per head should cover the expenses in most cases, increasing this slightly for the larger types of van. With motor vans of smaller type, the cost may be £8 a week per head, with an increase for larger vans. But it should be remembered that one must live anywhere and cost of food would be incurred, anyway, even if one stayed at home.

We have never come across a holiday-

maker who has tried caravanning, and enjoyed a reasonable amount of good weather, who has not both benefited from the trip and become enthusiastic concerning its restful delights—except one young lady. She was a Society person, who came with several trunks of extravagantly beautiful frocks, and was disgusted that she could only parade them before villagers' eyes, except now and then when we reached a seaside resort, and she was grieved at the disreputable appearance of most of the other members of the party, who delighted in wearing "any old thing."

Can one close better than by quoting from a song of the caravan?

I sing the song of the roomy van,
And the free life under the stars,
Apart from the haunts of busy man,
Where health I get and a face of tan,
And naught on my spirit jars.

The road I love and its winding way,
The mid-day halt, the simple food,
The sunset glow, the glist'ning bay,
The pitch on the heath at close of day.
And rustling trees in the wood



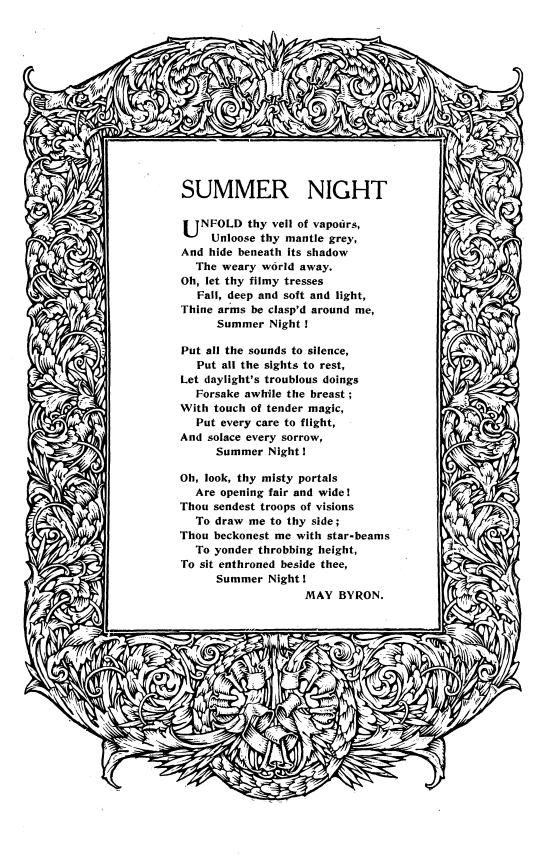
HAVEN.

HERE I can sit and watch the distant hills
Fade in the wearying riot of the sun,
Wait till the breeze of night the pinewood fills
With whispering of far lands and days long done;
Here, like a ship that enters tranquil seas,
Leaving my turbulent waters to the past,
I will remain awhile to take my ease,
Run out the chain and sink my anchor fast.

Yes, in this haven so long lost to me I shall between the past and future ride, Safe from afar the troubled waters see, Waiting the advent of an unknown tide.

When that tide comes, my ship shall take the strain And, with old hopes and fears, put forth again.

EDWARD LIVEING.



THE LESSON OF THE SEA

RALPH STOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY Μ. PADDAY

T'S Herriott!" exclaimed someone with binoculare to Lin with binoculars to his eyes.
"Of course it is," was the prompt

rejoinder. "Herriott doesn't let others see to that sort of thing—in a race.

pitching, too, by the look of it."

The wide terrace and green lawns of the vacht club were thronged with a welldressed, undemonstrative multitude, and every eye was on Stella, the leader in the race for the challenge cup. Something was amiss with her gaff topsail. It fluttered impotently while every other sail strained and bellied to a stiff nor'-easter.

Then a pigmy figure was seen to creep for ard to the mast, up it by the hoops to the shrouds, and still up and outward along the gaff. Twice it paused, clinging like a fly to the jolting, swaying spar as the yacht buried her aguiline nose in the muss of a lumpy sea. It reached the peak, a glinting white speck against the intense blue background of the sky, there was a brief struggle that could be better imagined than seen by the spectators, and the topsail was sheeted home, true and clean as a piece of cardboard.

A murmur of discreet applause went up from the club grounds. While gybing at the last mark, Stella's jackyard had fouled the peak halyards, and Herriott had cleared

it. The race was his.

Indeed, it would be difficult to mention anything that was not Jack Herriott's. Abounding health, sufficient means, and a charming wife were his, not to mention a seeming inability to do anything otherwise than brilliantly.

A blond and smiling giant, picturesquely dishevelled, he came ashore in one of the launches, to be inundated by members and friends. They congratulated him on winning the cup, but no mention was made of his

feat in clearing the jackyard under sail. That was no more than a piece of ordinary good seamanship that would be expected from a man like Herriott, and he knew his kind far too well to refer to it himself.

Behind him, and in almost glaring contrast as they threaded their way up the lawn, limped Tony Landon, Herriott's mate on the Stella, and oldest friend. Physically was sufficiently unattractive to be remarkable rather than insignificant, and the wound in his foot, received in France, had not added to his charm. Also a certain gaucherie made him anything but a social ornament, but in his good-natured, openhearted way Herriott had clung to his old friend even after marriage, which was admitted to be a trifle unusual.

Stella Herriott met her husband on the terrace, smiled her congratulations, and allowed him to pass on into the club, where he sprawled at length in a deep leather chair and listened to divergent views on the race with a sufficient showing of boredom.

"Splendid, wasn't it?" said Landon, during a brief moment with Stella at the end

of the terrace.

She nodded and smiled. "And you," she added swiftly.

"I?" Landon's unlovely face creased

into a frown of perplexity.

"You were at the wheel while he was aloft, weren't you?"

"Oh, that!"
"Yes," said Stella gravely. "You'll dine

to-night?"

Landon inclined his head and retreated precipitately before the onrush of a nautical dowager. As a matter of fact, he needed no invitation to the Herriotts'. His status as a friend of the family was of the "dropping in" variety-which made it all the more difficult to keep away.

In the lounge-hall he found Herriott contemplating the cup he had won that afternoon.

"Conning the spoils, eh?" Landon

commented.

Herriott turned and smiled. "Yes," he said, "and thinking."

"Mistake," grunted Landon.

"As a rule, perhaps, but not this time." Herriott's eyes shone with enthusiasm. He held aloft the cup. "This empty bauble has filled me with horrid ambition-

"America Cup or anything like that?"

"Something as far from cups as I can get. I'm sick of 'em.'

Landon nodded.

" And of racing, and racing machines, and white flannels, and club dinners, and claptrap. I want the sea."

Rather a large order, isn't it?"

"You ought to know."

Landon did know. There were few things he had not done in a somewhat hectic youth, from brass-polishing to sailorising before the

"I've never had a chance really to get out," complained Herriott-" family and that sort of thing—but I'm going to now, that's all. Stella agrees that it would do us both good."

"Both?'

"Yes, you don't imagine she'd be left out of anything like that, do you?"

Landon did not answer.

"I don't believe Lan approves," Herriott communicated to his wife in mock confidence during dinner. "Thinks the sea's altogether too much for us. We'll teach him!"

And they did, over coffee in the lounge. "Elucidate the mystery," suggested

Landon, stirring his cup thoughtfully. "Certainly," beamed Herriott. idea is no paid hands, salt junk, four hours on and eight off, and a passage and perhaps a bucketing in a boat, instead of a slithering match in a racing machine."

"Where to?'

"West Indies for choice."

"I see," said Landon, after a pause.

"Drat the man!" Herriott broke out, with a characteristic touch of impatience. "What's the matter? Think Stella's not up to it?"

Landon's slow glance travelled from his coffee cup to the delicate profile of the

woman at his side.

"Because I may tell you she's the best hand I ever had aboard," Herriott defended loyally. "If you think the briny's too much

for Stella, you ought to have been with us in the sailing dinghy when——"

"I wasn't thinking anything of the sort,"

said Landon quietly.

"Then perhaps you're frightened of me," suggested Herriott, with an incredulous but slightly nettled laugh.

Landon laughed also. The occasion called for it. Stella saw fit to come to the rescue.

"When you've quite done discussing me like a pound of pork," she said, "may I suggest that we're giving poor Lan rather an uncomfortable evening?"

" I hope so," grinned Herriott.

" And do you expect him to enthuse over

anything? Because I don't."

"He needn't," complained Herriott; "but that's no reason why he should sit like an owl when his skipper—his skipper, mark you—suggests getting out of sight of the club-house for once."

" And all this," sighed Landon resignedly, " because I don't leap to my feet and wave my arms in ecstasy at the notion of you good people facing salt junk for a month!"

"Then you'll come?"

"I ? "

"Listen to him!" wailed Herriott. "He's just tumbled to it that he's wanted."

Landon stared at his injured foot after a fashion of his. "As to navigation," he suggested irrelevantly, "my mathematics are the memory of an ugly dream these days. How are yours?"

"Worse. I thought of taking old Owen. He has a yachting ticket, and juggling with sights and figures is about all he's fit for."

Landon stirred in his chair, then rose abruptly. "All right," he said, "I'll go—I mean——"

"We know what you mean," laughed Herriott-" that you will be delighted to accompany my wife and myself on a unique cruise to the West Indies."

"Something like that," said Landon.

"Good night.

When he had gone, Herriott fell to discussing plans with the ardour of a schoolboy. He was intense, virile, over anything that took his fancy, and it was so that Stella loved to see him. They had been married a contented year, and it was their mutual taste for yachting that had brought them together. Stella would never forget that. Born of seafaring stock, and reared within sight and sound of the Atlantic's infinite moods, her own love of the sea and ships was innate. Unconsciously, perhaps, her

standards were set by them. There are some women like that.

"There's no fathoming old Lan," Herriott called through to her from the dressing-room that night. "I wonder if we're dragging him into this thing against his will?"

"I don't think anyone could do that," she answered.

"I suppose not, but——" The rest was smothered in a yawn, and Herriott fell to whistling a chanty between his teeth.

Stella awoke suddenly, completely, as one gets into the habit of doing at sea. The *Pioneer*, a snub-nosed, essentially seaworthy pilot cutter of fifteen tons register, converted into a luxurious cruiser with tremendous enthusiasm by Herriott, was rolling idly, her canvas fluttering, the boom straining at the main sheet with every lurch of the ship.

Stella concluded they were becalmed, and, instinctively pitying the unfortunate on watch, settled down again to make the most of the few hours' sleep at her disposal. From the first she had insisted on being treated as one of the crew, nothing more nor less, and she had been taken at her word. In consequence, since leaving port four days ago she had been happier than at any time since, as a girl, she navigated her own small craft amongst the rocky bays and islands of her home.

The same sea sense that had told her the Pioneer was becalmed now informed her that such a thing could not be. There was a breeze; she could hear it. Was it possible that the yacht had come up into the wind, that the helmsman had succumbed to the terrible drowsiness that often assails him through staring overlong at the swaying compass card? She slipped from the bunk of her minute cabin and passed through to where a sliding hatch aft afforded a glimpse of the helmsman in the steering well. There The wheel was deserted and was none. locked amidships. The *Pioneer* was hove-to.

Through a porthole in the hatch combing it was also possible to command a view of the deck for ard, and here, with face pressed close to the glass, Stella stood as one hypnotised. In the searching moonlight all was clear. Her husband and Landon were on deck, barefooted as always, but standing with bowed heads beside an indistinct shape that lay in shadow. Landon's lips were moving.

At the moment Stella was impelled to rush on deck. What had happened? Why had they not told her? Was this treating her as one of the crew? But something restrained her, perhaps the age-old discipline of the seafarer that was in her blood. The captain, even if he were her own husband. had not seen fit to summon her. Perhaps he was right. Her presence might have made things more difficult. In any case it was enough.

Landon's lips had ceased to move. The two men stooped, raised the burden at their feet, and gently lowered it over the side. When they straightened themselves, their hands were empty. They came aft, talking in low tones, but when seated on the sliding hatch every word was audible.

". . . and what on earth do we do now?" demanded her husband in a voice that was new to her.

"Hush!" whispered Landon. "She still

sleeps, thank God!"

"Hush nothing!" said Herriott petulantly. "She would be the first to want to be told."

There was a short pause.

"I know," said Landon. "Of course you must do as you think best—my mistake.

The matter seemed to pass from Herriott's mind.

"We must turn back," he stated firmly; "that goes without saying. But what I don't know is how we're going to get there. Do you?"

It was the voice of a lost child.

"We have yesterday's noon position on the chart, and we've got a log. It's dead reckoning, and I can do that. If the present wind holds-"

"Ah, the wind!" muttered Herriott.

"I was just thinking-"

"I shouldn't do too much of that. It isn't always good.''

"What d'you mean?" The tone was

truculent.

"I mean," came Landon's level response, " that we're on a different lay to racing now. We're at sea. We've been playing at things; now we're up against 'em. What's more, we're 'hands'-not bad 'hands,' as they go, but we can't navigate."

'Is that what made you so infernally

chary of joining us ? "

" Partly."

" And the rest?"

"There's something coming up from the nor'-east," said Landon. "How's the barometer?"



"Herriott took him in his powerful hands, flung him on

Stella heard him creep for ard, down the fo'castle companion, and into the saloon. There was the brief flash of an electric torch, again darkness, and the soft patter of his returning footfall.

"How is it?" came Herriott's anxious question.

" Fallen, and still at it."

"And what does that mean here?"

"Haven't a notion till it gets us," said Landon, "but we're all right hove-to. Look here, this thing has got on our nerves, and small wonder. I suggest you turn in until dawn."

"And you?"

"I'm as comfortable here as anywhere." "You'll call me if anything happens?"

"Double quick."

By the time Herriott had reached the

saloon Stella was in her bunk. She heard a cupboard opened softly, the faintest clink of glass, and a sigh as her husband settled down on one of the settees. She lay motionless, staring wide-eved at the whiteenamelled timber overhead.

With the dawn a grey nor'-easter bore down upon the *Pioneer*, and quickly strengthened to a gale. Hove-to under double-reefed mainsail, the little yacht took it without flinching, as she had been built to do, and Stella busied herself with preparing hot drinks for the men when they should come below.

In passing through the saloon to the galley she found her husband still outstretched on the cushions.

"Stella," he said, "I have something horrible to tell you. Owen died last night.



deck, and seized the wheel. 'Go below,' he ordered."

She did not attempt to simulate surprise, but sat on the settee beside him without speaking.

"He just petered out at the wheel," Herriott went on in a strained voice. "It was my relief, and I found him sitting there—dead. Heart failure, I suppose. We—we made quite sure, and then buried him."

"Why didn't you tell me?" said Stella

gently.

"Lan—we both thought it best not to.
We should never have brought him. It's

my fault. I feel terrible about it."
"Why?" said Stella. "You needn't.
It was no one's fault. He knew what he was in for, and still wanted to come." She paused. "It's the way I should like to go when I do," she added quietly.

Herriott looked at her. There was something in his eyes that she had not seen there before.

"You take it well," he said.

"How else would you have me take it?" she asked him.

"It's this awful feeling of responsibility for everything — everything," muttered Herriott. "It weighs me down. I must share it with someone."

"Why not with me?" said Stella.

"Lan doesn't approve---'

"Pouf for Lan!" said Stella. "He's not captain."

"I suppose that's it. But he ought to

Stella gave him a quick, almost startled look.

"He ought to be," repeated Herriott.

"I feel it. He has this infernal sea knack of doing things without talking about them. He's a born seaman. I'm discovering that I'm not."

Stella put a finger to his lips. "Never say that," she said. "I can't believe it."

"You mean you don't want to."

"I mean I don't want to, and I can't."

A wave crest smote the *Pioneer* a resounding thwack on her snub nose and swept the deck, dying with a gurgle in the scuppers.

Herriott swung his feet from the settee.

"Listen," he said. "You may as well know. We're hove-to in a gale that may last a week and drift us anywhere. There's nothing between us and the Equator but the sea, and neither Lan nor I can navigate. I think that's all—oh, except that there are only fifteen gallons in the freshwater tank. You see the position?"

"Yes," she said, "and thanks—I like to know. I'll have breakfast ready in ten

minutes."

Herriott caught her at the galley door. "No, by thunder, you don't!" he roared, thrusting her aside, and commenced wrestling with the kettle in the reeling galley.

Stella left him to it, and went on deck in oilskins. Landon, soaked through, was limping about the deck seeing to lashings.

"Better go below!" he shouted at her

above the turmoil of wind and sea.

She did not answer, but returned him look for look, and proceeded to help. Soon they had finished. The *Pioneer* rode like a cork. Grey, wind-swept hills of water bore down on her out of the angry murk ahead, but she soared to their summit and down their reverse slopes with the agility of an acrobat.

"She's snug!" shouted Landon, grinning through rivulets of salt water. "Staunch

little packet."

Stella nodded and smiled. He looked aft

and waved an arm.

"Sea room, that's all we want," he said, "and we've got it. She's all right; come below."

Stella was following him towards the companion when he turned in the lee of the hatch.

"Jack's told you?" he said.

"Yes," she answered, and they went below.

Herriott was fuming over the inadequacies of oil stoves in anything of a sea, and when the meal was served he sat silent and morose. He was a changed man, and he knew it. There is nothing quite like a prolonged bucketing in small craft to give the best of us a glimpse of himself. Herriott felt vaguely that the sea had found him wanting, and the knowledge alternately

surprised and tortured him.

Neither Stella nor Landon addressed him, but talked of the habits of sea-birds during storm, of the formation and action of waves, and such-like trivialities that irritated Herriott beyond expression. Was it possible that they were blind to their position? Or were their verbal banalities a mask? In any case they were treating him as a child, he felt. It was a conspiracy between this friend of his and his own wife to humiliate and nullify him. There was a bond between them, too. It was the first time he had noticed it. How long had it been? What was it? He must be careful, very careful, but he was not to be fooled. Suspicion smouldered in his eyes.

He left the table abruptly and went on deck, to cling to the shrouds and stare stonily over the tossing wind-swept waste. In that hour it seemed to Herriott that the sea was imbued with personality. He had wanted it—as his servant. It was here—his master. It was sapping him of his manhood, discovering him to his wife and to his friend. It was a mighty, unknown enemy

that he hated and feared.

"Jack's out of sorts," said Stella, when

he had gone.

"I know," Landon answered, without meeting her steady gaze. "You must remember I've known him a long time—longer than you." She waited for him to go on, and he did—he had to. "Salt junk, and one thing and another. He'll be all right in a day or two."

That was all they said. It was all they

needed to say.

For three days and three nights the *Pioneer* rode and drifted, and with the dawn of the fourth the wind veered, without slackening strength, to the opposite quarter. Landon noted the change.

"It's fair," he said. They were the first words he had uttered to Herriott in two days. "We ought to make all the northing

we can."

"Fire ahead," returned Herriott; "you're in charge."

"Since when?"

" Now."
" Why ? "

"Because I choose."

The two men faced one another on the lurching deck. They had known each other

as well as it is possible for one man to know another under normal present-day circumstances, yet now each looked into the eyes of a stranger. Landon turned on his heel.
"All right," he said. "Stand by to hoist

the square-sail."

Herriott obeyed with compressed lips, and presently the Pioneer was racing homeward before a following gale. At the wheel it was soul-racking work. The grey hills of water had grown to mountains, up which the little craft was lifted as by a giant hand and flung reeling into the valley beyond. Combers, seemingly out of the sky, hung over her and broke, as by a miracle, astern. It was fatal for the helmsman to look behind him. In the history of the sea more than one has been shot for so doing. The sight causes the breath to catch, the body to flinch for just that fraction of time that it takes to broach-to and founder.

And Stella enjoyed it! Herriott made the amazing discovery that night while his wife was on watch, and her small, finelychiselled face came into the searching radius of the binnacle lights. It was the face of a thoroughbred engaged in combat that it The thing was inexplicable to Herriott. He dreaded his trick at the wheel with an intensity of which he had never

dreamed himself capable.

At midnight, through the sliding hatch, he watched Landon relieve Stella. They talked. Herriott caught wind-blown snatches

"... must be doing ten at the least.... Plumb on our course, as far as I can make out. If this lasts . . ."

"She answers well."

" Like a bird. . . . Ah, here they come!" The hissing thunder of a breaker drowned the rest. The *Pioneer* was hurled into a pit that appeared bottomless until at long last she brought up with a soul-sickening jolt. Landon's set face, with its protruding jaw, relaxed into a grin of triumph.

"Like a bird!" he repeated admiringly.

Herriott staggered to his bunk, gripped the creaking, white-enamelled timber overhead in his two hands, and laughed—if it could be called a laugh. "'Like a bird!'" he mimicked inanely between clenched teeth, and laughed again. The bond—this was the bond between them, their inborn love of the sea that he had thought his also until the soul-revealing nightmare of the past two weeks. And now he found himself an outsider aboard his own ship—with his own wife! He was an intruder, a mountebank. Herriott still hated the sea, but quite suddenly he no longer feared it. It was his enemy, and he would fight.

At four o'clock he went to relieve Landon.

" How's she going?" he asked.

"Bit tricky," said Landon, without taking his eyes from the swaying compass

Herriott waited, but Landon made no

"It's my watch," said Herriott.

"Do you think-

"I've given up thinking—on your advice. It's my watch."

The Pioneer fell corkscrewing into an inky trough. Landon righted her with an effort.

"Stella's below," he said shortly. "You put me in charge. I'm going to carry on."

A white rage seized on Herriott, but he

controlled it.

"I was sick," he said steadily. "I'm all right now, and I'll take over."

He waited for an answer, but there was

" If you don't hand over, I'll make you," said Herriott.

"Don't be a fool—as well," muttered Landon.

Herriott took him in his powerful hands, flung him on deck, and seized the wheel.

"Go below," he ordered, and Landon

Outside Stella's cabin he paused.

"You heard?" he said.

"Yes," she answered.

"He took me by the scruff of the neck and pitched me on deck like a dog," he whispered gleefully "He's at the wheel, with a face like thunder. Jack's found him-

"Thank you, Lan," said Stella.

That was an interview between his wife and his friend that Herriott never heard about, but when the *Pioneer*, after as evil a. night as she had yet encountered, ran into fair weather and finally picked up her mooring off the club-house, he took Landon

"Is an apology any good, old man?"

" You "Not a bit," snapped Landon. ought to have brained me,"

THE LETTER

B_v H. F. FRAMPTON

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

N at least three mornings each week during the latter part of the eight we have so far suffered him," commenced Oakley, garrulous as usual, "he has risen with some abruptness from the breakfast-table and disappeared. Following on that comes from beyond the gate the swelling purr of a motor-car on the main The noise dwindles again and is road. Shortly afterwards he reappears. His expression is troubled. I have a presentiment that this is one of the mornings for the performance. Now, what do you make of it all?"

His wife took the cup he proffered and

refilled it for him.

"Are you speaking of Gilbert?" she said.

At mention of his name the young man looked up from the letter he had been reading and, ignoring the first speaker, passed the missive to his sister.

"Jack Holden's latest request," he supplemented. "What a casual card the

fellow is!"

"' Dear Gilbert,' " Mrs. Oakley began, "'I am sending you the ker-ket-kit-

"Allow me," Oakley interposed, relieving his wife of the letter. "This appears to be a task for a really educated person."

"' Key' the word is," Gilbert Merton

interjected. "And here it is."

He tossed an envelope on to his brother-inlaw's plate, where it alighted with a muffled clink. Oakley cleared his throat.

"Berkeley Club note-paper," he commented, "and dated two days ago, viz., May the third."

"Get on with it," said his guest.
"Dear Gilbert," Oakley read slowly, "'I am sending you the key of Wilma Lodge, as it is round about the time you go to stay with your sister. It is still furnished, and I have left the gardener in charge, but there's nothing like being on the safe side. What I would like you to do is to pop over, when you can fit it in, and see that everything is all right. You know what I mean. Don't bother if it interferes with your arrangements. Please remember me kindly to Oakley and Mrs.Oakley.—Jack Holden.'

"What do you think of it?" Merton

inquired.

"A nice, chatty letter," Oakley informed "It's so nice to hear from one's friends. Aren't you glad they invented the

post-office?"

"That's Jack Holden all over!" said Mrs. Oakley indignantly. "Does he think you've got nothing to do but run about for him? He should have been married ten years ago; he's been pampered too much. Of course you won't bother, Gilbert?"

"Yes, I will," replied her brother firmly. "I was going out, in any case, and the request isn't very outrageous. I shall walk, I

think."

"You will," mused Oakley grimly. "I don't think the Lodge is more than ten miles away." He picked up the envelope. "Re-addressed from your flat," he continued. "Now, has he forgotten our address, or was he in doubt about the date of your visit?"

Both, I imagine," said Merten. "I haven't seen much of him since last summer." Oakley spilled the key from its covering

and examined it.

"Newly cut," he observed. "I suppose

the gardener has the original."

"Presumably," returned his brother-inlaw drily. He turned to his sister. "Has he been indulging in a course of detective stories lately?"

Mrs. Oakley rose.

"It loves to be Sherlocky," she said. En route for the door she rumpled her husband's hair.

Oakley regarded his brother-in-law

through half-closed eyes.

"Your abrupt rise," he quoted, "the noise of the car, the return, the troubled expression, the-"

The ass who makes mysteries out of molehills," Merton finished mockingly.

He reached for the key and followed his sister.

A maid entered the room and commenced to clear the breakfast table. Oakley, who had risen, leisurely lighted a cigarette and stretched himself, conscious of the girl's curious glances. He then caught sight of himself in a mirror. He made hastily for the doorway.

Breakfast that morning had been earlier than usual, and there was a freshness in the air that made pedestrianism more than usually pleasant. Merton changed his mind about smoking a pipe, and stowed that article away again. Greenfinches chirpily greeted him from the bordering trees as he energetically strode the dusty way, and now and again a beautiful, orange-speckled butterfly fluttered in the sun before his face.

Now, and again in the autumn, the winding road made appeal at every turn. At times it lost dignity as a thoroughfare, but only to regain it later on; and finally red roofs glinted through the early green of the trees, and uncouth, youthful voices vied with the notes of the greenfinch and the thrush.

Merton noticed that, despite its beauties, the road took toll from the rates, for there was an occasional mound of stones by the roadside, and there were car tracks in the

Presently he stopped and listened. Ahead, the road wound to the left, but the sound was that of an approaching car. A small "run-about" rounded the bend, driven by a staid-looking chauffeur and conveying a lady in a dark fur coat. Her veil was completely raised, a strand of sable hair escaping beneath it, and the wind had sown roses in her cheeks and fanned the brilliance of her eyes.

As the car drew near to him, Merton gravely lifted his cap, and, before the car had flashed by, an answering inclination had come from the lady. This was all; but afterwards there was less energy in his progress, and he was thoughtful. Later, a small clock in the window of a village postoffice caught his wandering gaze. compared it hastily with his wrist-watch and hurried on.

Wilma Lodge was a modest residence and a neat, with a short drive at the side leading to a motor-house. There was a south-east aspect, half an acre of ground, and a few "modern conveniences." Commencing its career as the vicarage, it had later degenerated into a "week-end" cottage, but no vicissitude had sapped from its achievement in the realm of the picturesque.

A squat, thatched building a hundred yards away was sending a spiral of smoke into the tree-tops. Merton supposed that this was the abode of the gardener, but had retained no recollection of its existence

from earlier visits.

As he carefully closed the gate of Wilma Lodge, he saw that the gardener's existence was justified, for the lawn was in excellent condition and the borders were a pattern of symmetry.

He glanced at his watch—half-past eleven. It was two hours since the incident of the car. In the porch before the front door he paused to fumble for the key. The next moment he was inside the house.

The appearance of the hall was familiar to him; he was confronted with a flight of pile-carpeted stairs to the bedrooms above. A tabby kitten lay curled up at the foot. It seemed probable that the gardener had recently been inside the house and inadvertently allowed the animal access. He picked it up and put it out.

The door from the hall to the servants' quarters was closed, but the one on his left was slightly ajar, and led, as he knew, to a drawing-room. He pushed it open and entered. The dust-coverings which he had expected to see were absent. A bowl of fresh-cut flowers stood on an octagonal table under one of the windows, and in the corner by the door was an escritoire-open and littered with telegraph forms—which had certainly not been there on the occasion of his last visit during the course of the preceding summer.

"Surely the gardener hasn't had cheek enough to take up residence here!" he marvelled.

Somewhere in the house a door opened and footsteps sounded. At the same moment a car drove up to the house and came to a standstill. The footsteps reached the drawing-room doorway, and an openmouthed housemaid stood gazing at him through it.

"That clears the gardener," he muttered, "unless he's doing it on a swell scale with a household staff!"

Somebody entered at the front door.

"What is it?" a voice inquired. tone was authoritative yet kindly, but it was the rich, musical undertone which thrilled Merton into expectant stillness.

The maid pointed at him and made way for the newcomer. It was the lady of the dark fur coat. She could hardly have been

"The front door was shut, ma'am, I'm sure of that. How-

"Thank you, Bella; you need not wait," said the mistress. She came into the room and sat down, inviting Merton to do the same.



twenty-five years of age, but her surprise was better concealed, if no less real, than his. He removed his cap.

"He let himself in," remarked the maid.
"I never let him in, ma'am."

"That is so," Merton confirmed. "I'm very sorry; I had no idea the house was in occupation."

"I'm sure there is an explanation," she said pleasantly.

Merton introduced himself and the object of his visit. It was not easy to be coherent with those eyes dwelling, as he thought, a shade quizzically upon him, but he achieved conviction.

"I rented this house, furnished, from



in so soon?"

"It is inexplicable," said Merton.

agreed."

the lady's lips—"I hasten to apologise for him as well as for myself."
"That would be more incredible still," "He suggested the date himself, and I

the lady pointed out-"I mean your alternative. Where would be the point in

such a joke?"

"Exactly," Merton hastened to agree. "Then it must be sheer absent-mindedness. I shall write, and—er—pretty forcibly," he finished weakly.

She reached for the little hand-mirror from a table at her side and, with the help of the glass, made a slight adjustment to her hat. Merton rose with a flash of inspiration.

My sister has no idea that Wilma Lodge is occupied," he said, forcing the suave note. "I'm sure she will want to call when she does know-that is, unless you-"

She got up, and the fur at her neck fell apart, to reveal a glimpse of white

throat.

"I shall be very glad to make the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. Oakley," she responded quietly. "It would be lonely here if it were not for my sister living comparatively close at hand. As it is, we exchange visits regularly. To-day is the exception, and I had my journey for nothing. Do you think Mr. and Mrs. Oakley would come to tea this afternoon?"

"They would be delighted," averred

Merton recklessly.

"Bring them yourself. It will be warm enough for tea on the lawn. And perhaps you'll bring the letter, too?"

"What there is of it," Merton assented. "But I'm afraid it won't throw much light on the matter. Depend upon it, it was absent-mindedness.'

His eye alighted on the open escritoire

and the sheaf of blank forms.

"Don't you think a man like that deserves a sharp lesson?" he asked.

She gazed at him uncomprehendingly.

"May I?" he requested, indicating the escritoire.

"Do you want to send a telegram?"

" Please."

Accorded permission, he seated himself, drew forward and hastily filled in a telegraph form. Silently he handed her the result. It was addressed to Holden at the Berkeley Club.

" Letter received Lodge evidently been recently occupied nothing much missing have screwed up doors and windows for safety Merton," she read, and laughed.

"This is entirely on your own responsibility?" she added.

"Entirely. I shall hand it in on my way back."

"That doesn't mean that I shan't be interested in the outcome," she told him.

It was during the drive back—for the lateness of the morning hour had induced him to accept her offer to send him home in her car—that for the first time he learned her name. She was the widow of a Lieutenant-Colonel Devenish. The information was the indirect result of certain remarks from the staid chauffeur, an exsoldier who had served under the late Colonel.

Oakley's car held four persons with comfort, more with the consent of the chauffeur. Oakley himself was seated in front.

In due course he turned and surveyed the

couple behind.

"Presently," he announced, "we shall reach one of those delightful, old-world villages which nestle amid the greenery and are idylly oblivious of the grinding cares which follow in the wake of charges for electricity and gas bills."
"I know," said Merton; "I reached it

this morning. It boasts a pub, a general shop, and a post-office. I wonder the inhabitants don't insist on national control of

their institutions."

"I want to speak to you," announced his sister.

"What-again?" said Oakley.

His wife ignored him and bent confidentially towards her brother.

"Tell me this, Gilbert," she said softly, "did your walks coincide with the passing of the car purposely?"

Merton resolutely folded his arms and

looked straight in front of him.

"I won't ask you that, then," she continued. "Will you tell me if there was a lady in the car?"

Her brother continued to gaze at Oakley's

"Is Mrs. Devenish the lady of the car?"

she vainly persisted.

Merton felt his sister's arm slipped through his, and presently he turned his head and met her eyes.

"Is she very nice?" she whispered. He pressed the arm within his own.

"And now," said Oakley, over the chauffeur's shoulder, "we reach the village so eloquently described by a recent speaker. The post-office is on the right, and can be recognised by the geraniums on the windowsill and the two-and-ninepenny clock in the window. The youth outside, with the red bicycle and the ammunition-boots, is---"

He broke off suddenly as the car passed the little post-office and swung round a bend in the street.

"Did he wave to us?" he demanded.

"Who?" inquired Merton, bestirring himself. "The youth with the red bicycle?"
The same."

"Why should he wave to us?" was

Mrs. Oakley's naïve contribution.

"Perhaps I was mistaken," said Oakley, "but I had the impression that he waved a buff envelope at us in what I can only describe as a provocative manner. However, if so, he'll be sent on from home, and the additional exercise will do him good."

When the telegram arrived, tea, considered strictly as a meal, was finished, and the porch of Wilma Lodge was casting a lengthening shadow over the debris. There was as yet no hint of chill in the warm air, and the smoke from Oakley's cigarette rose in an unbroken column until dissipated into the blue.

Oakley had been suffering from repression. "Mrs. Devenish," he presently said, and with a firmness which gave him the floor, "I would like it understood that to you no blame attaches at all. Whenever, during the course of the sitting, I have endeavoured to interpose a remark, you have always showed willingness to listen to it; but my wife—who, you would imagine, should find her chief delight in living for the pearls which not infrequently pass my lips—has on every

"Silver flood," his wife corrected. "It's silence that's golden." She turned again to her hostess. "Did you ever hear whether Alice Gough really did take the veil?"

Oakley regarded his brother-in-law.

occasion stemmed the golden flood."

"If," he said brokenly, "your sister ever meets any more old school-friends while I'm present, I shall take a vow of silence and enter a monastery."

Merton may or may not have heeded him. He was discovering that the world was a desirable place to live in, and that winered charmeuse with old-gold edging was a perfect setting for the most ebon of hair and the whitest of skin.

Then the telegram arrived, and Laura Devenish directed the maid over to him.

Aloud he read:

"' Heaven's sake unscrew doors also windows house inhabited or should be am following arrange put me up somewhere Holden.

He looked up to meet the amusement in the eyes of the widow.

"What's the answer?" queried the

puzzled Oakley.

"The boy need not wait," said Merton; " there's no reply."

He requested the loan of a railway time-

table and consulted it.

" The telegram seems to have been handed in at two-seventeen," he calmly informed them. "Assuming that he caught the first possible train after handing in the telegram, he should reach Wilmington at five-ten. He will then taxi to Elmhurst, find us absent, and come on here. It is now five-thirty. We may therefore expect him at any moment."

"Expect whom?" his sister asked.

"What are you talking about?"

"He ought to have told you," Mrs. Devenish interposed. "I'm afraid this makes me an accessory after the fact, as well as before."

She acquainted the Oakleys with the fuller details of Merton's morning call. Oakley's face became appreciative, but his wife's was thoughtful.

"This means we must put him up for

the night," she exclaimed.

The prospect did not seem to strike her as alluring. There was a pause.

"Did you remember to bring the letter?"

Mrs. Devenish inquired.

Merton handed it over, and she perused it in some bewilderment.

"But this one is two months old!" she objected.

An incredulous silence greeted the com-

"Don't you see ? " she pointed out, handing the letter to Oakley. "March the third.

M-a-r-it is an 'r,' isn't it ? "

"Now you mention it," replied Oakley coolly, "the hieroglyphic has a faint resemblance to the stressed letter in the Scotch alphabet. When people use abbreviations," he continued bitterly, "why don't they put the dot after 'em? If I were Gilbert, I should remove the box arrangement from underneath the slit in my door immediately on my return to Town. Caretakers can always see letters better when they drop on mats. You ask doctors."

"That's all very well," rejoined his wife. "Meanwhile Mr. Holden may be here at any moment, and what are we to say to

him ? "

"It is none of our business," returned Oakley primly. He stood up and handed the letter to Merton as though it were unclean. "We wash our hands of it. We are forced," he went on, addressing his hostess urbanely, "to curtail our visit, but I am sure you understand that—er——"

"Laura understands that, thanks to you and Gilbert, I have the airing of some linen to see to," his wife put in, as she lifted back her chair.

The two ladies exchanged kisses.

"I suppose I ought to wait in case Holden turns up here," Merton reflected, the casual note a trifle overdone.

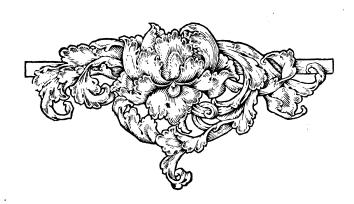
"Naturally," Oakley readily allowed, as he released Mrs. Devenish's hand. "He will probably arrive in a closed vehicle. Should this not be the case, and we encounter each other en route, I shall cut him dead. You can explain to him that I am short-sighted. It fits the facts. Come along." And he took his wife's arm.

Merton watched them depart.

"Are you very nervous?" said a soft voice at his side.

He turned and, giving way to an overpowering impulse, seized Laura's hands in his.

"Shockingly," he acknowledged thickly, but not of Jack Holden."



IN KEDAR'S TENTS.

IN Kedar's tents, the seasons through, Of all the dear delight I drew In secret from your winning ways, How sweet your presence made the days, Gay, tender heart, you little knew.

The paths whereon we strayed, we two,
Now sunder. One goes out of view,
Since Time's swift foot nor stops nor stays
In Kedar's tents.

And, little comrade, brave and true,
You have elsewhere your work to do.
My heart, even while the thought dismays,
Silent the hard decree obeys . . .
Child, child . . . that leaves me wanting you
In Kedar's tents.

F. M. HALLWARD.

THE PASSING OF MAJOR HAMILTON

By EDGAR WALLACE

Author of "Sanders of the River," "The People of the River," "Bones," "The Keepers of the King's Peace," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN, A.R.A.

T is said with some truth that all wars begin with a woman, and certain it is that the war which the people of Tofolaka joined to make is traceable to Egeni, who was a woman of fifteen, the daughter of the chief Rimilaka, who might have been the wife of M'ndi, the dead chief of the Tofolaka, but that the high chief and his subordinate fell out over the price of her. Her father demanded twenty goats, but M'ndi stuck at eight goats. So they went apart, and on the day that Bosambo's spear cut short the life of M'ndi, this woman Egeni had been married for seven moons, though not to the man she loved.

It was all to the bad that her husband was a quiet man and in awe of her, because she was the daughter of Rimilaka, who was marked for the chieftainship. On the first day of her coming to her husband's hut she settled any question which might have existed as to the dominant partnership in their new combination by hitting him with an iron pot on the head, so that he bled. And he carried his woes to Rimilaka.

"You are no headman for me if you

cannot rule a wife," said Rimilaka.
"What shall I do?" wailed the unfortunate husband.
"Beat her," said Rimilaka.

So the husband went home and took a stick to his wife, encouraged thereto by the whole village, and he beat Egeni.

That night came Bosambo with his eighty soldiers, making a forced march across the Tofolaka country to join Mr. Administrator Sanders; and he slept that night in the village, taking a chance, for the main body of M'ndi's army was only eight hours distant.

And he took the headman's hut, as was his right, and the headman's wife served him with her own hands, for she did not know that this was the man who had killed M'ndi, the news of which killing had come through within a few hours of his death.

Bosambo was not like the natives of the country; he was blacker and taller, broader of shoulders, longer of neck, and much quicker to smile.

"Lord," she said to Bosambo, "how come you to call yourself king of all this land? For M'ndi, who was chief of these parts——"

"M'ndi I killed," said Bosambo, and had not said the words before he had regretted them.

She jumped away from him as though he had been a leper, and in the morning, when Bosambo and his eighty soldiers had gone at a jog-trot into the forest, her husband, the little headman, carried the story to Rimilaka, and this time Rimilaka listened, and called the elder men to his palaver house.

He was next in line to the chief of the Tofolaka people, so that he had at hand the means to enforce his will. He sent a regiment into the forest to intercept Bosambo and his party, and they marched away with stately strides, to the admiration of all who saw them. But whilst they were walking with stately strides, Bosambo's men were running without dignity—that easy jog-trot which he had taught the people of the Ochori, and which covers six steady miles an hour. Bosambo had reached the river and had commandeered the necessary canoes to carry him to Rimi-Rimi before his pursuers were within twenty miles of II.

On the aft deck of the Zaire the great man squatted, a large glass of beer before himthe one alcoholic dissipation which Sanders had ever allowed his favourite chief-and told his fears.

"Lord," he said, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand and raising his eyes ecstatically, an expression at singular variance with the news he had to tell, "I think there will be war in the Tofolaka country; for, as I came through, I saw very few young men, and I learnt that most of them were Also I saw the women building in camp. houses.

That was a significant happening, as Sanders knew, for the building of houses is a prerogative jealously preserved to the male of the species.

"What spears do they muster, Bosam-

bo?" asked Sanders.

"Lord, I think three tribes, because a man of the country told me six, and the Tofolaka people are notorious liars and boasters."

Three tribes roughly represented twentyfour thousand spears, which was serious enough for Sanders. In preparation for Bosambo's coming, Sanders had sent to all the tribes and peoples, to the Tofolaka, the Bubujala, to the Fongini and the Kasala which lies to the due east of the Tofolaka country—telling them to send chiefs for a palaver of state. And all had sent respectable representatives except the Tofolaka. From here had come only a few unimportant headmen of the fishing villages, and their appearance merely denoted a desire to be on the safe side, since, being on the river's shore, their villages were open to attack. Once more was the big space in the centre of the city filled with the people of Rimi-Rimi, the ambassadors from the far-off countries forming an inner circle to the great conclave.

"O people of this land," said Sanders, " see me.

"I see you," came in a deep chorus.

"All the people of Rimi-Rimi and the country about know me because of my name," said Sanders. "For I have given the law in the country beyond the mountains. Also here I have given the law, and men have died because they resisted Where is the big chief K'salugu M'popo? He is dead because my lightning killed him. And where is Mofolobo? He also is dead. And Lubolama and others? And now I will tell you that M'ndi of the

Tofolaka, he also is dead by the hand of

my minister.
"Now, I have tried to find from all the people of this land one worthy to sit in the place of the Old Man and give the law, and I have found none but evil men; so I have sent for Bosambo, paramount Chief of the Ochori and a great warrior, of whom you have heard, and him have I set up to be king over you all."

He saw the scowls, the looks of surprise, and in some cases of consternation, and a

voice asked:

"Lord, why do you set a foreigner over

us proud people of Rimi-Rimi?"

"That you shall ask the king," said Sanders shortly, for he intended leaving a lot to Bosambo.

He turned to that man, standing now before a new carved chair, and threw over his shoulders the coarse-woven purple which robed the kings of Rimi-Rimi, and strapped about him a Sam Browne belt and a long infantry sword—donated for the occasion by Captain Tibbetts-and then stepped back.

"O Bosambo," he said, "you shall be king of these lands, and shall hold the territory for my several masters, and you shall rule justly and treat all men

equally.'

Bosambo had seated himself, a truly kingly figure. Now he rose solemnly and raised his huge hand-two fingers were erect—and, speaking in English before the astonished and awe-stricken assembly, none more so than the three white men in his audience, he pronounced the Benediction!

Before the assembly could disperse, he

beckoned.

"Bring me that man," he said, and they dragged before him one who had looked scoffingly upon him.

"O man, who are you," he asked, "that you laugh in my face?"

"Lord, I did not laugh," said the trembling man. "Having a terrible pain in my teeth, my face goes thus and thus."

"What kind of man are you, for I see

you are no warrior?" said Bosambo.

" Lord, I am a little chief of the Bubujala,

also I am a cunning carver in wood."

"That is well," said Bosambo, eyeing him speculatively. "Now, you shall make me twenty drums of the size of this great drum of the Old King, and you shall not cover any of them, for it is my heart's desire that each shall be covered with the skin of an enemy, and that each enemy

shall come from a different tribe. Th

palaver is finished."

"Excellent propaganda," said Sanders, when this was reported to him. No doubt Bosambo had started well.

The Tofolaka could wait now, but there were other matters which could not wait. He felt the imminence of danger from another quarter, and Ahmet, the chief of his intelligence staff, who had been recruiting busily, sent out a cloud of spies, all moving cautiously in one direction, and having as their landmark the grey and tawny mass of Mount Limpisi.

Day followed day, and each was a day of tension and strain. Outwardly there was no sign. The land basked in the hot sunshine; the women worked in the fields; there was more laughter than usual from the crowded little streets of Rimi-Rimi; and reports from the Tofolaka were of a

negative character.

And yet all these people of Rimi-Rimi knew that from the Tofolaka country six men had come secretly to the Rimi-Rimi country, six proved slayers, such as had served M'ndi in the early days of his chieftainship when it became necessary to remove important rivals, and these had come, or were coming, with orders to slay the three white men and the new king who sat in the Old Man's place.

For once Sanders's spy system failed him, and he had no knowledge that the deputation was on its way. The first to discover the existence of this conspiracy was Bosambo the king. One day he was inspecting a quarter of the new city which was called the Village Between the Hills. He had with him a dozen men, and he himself was heavily armed. Out of the crowd of idlers and those impelled by curiosity to trail behind, or form a group about him when he stopped, came a lean man, and Bosambo saw that he wore no clothes, only a small cloth about his middle, and that his body glistened with He held on his outstretched palm two dried fish, and they were gifts such as men commonly bring in token of their loyalty to their master.

"O king, take these," said the man, and Bosambo reached out his hand and grasped, not the palm extended to him, but the right wrist hanging by the man's side with such cunning carelessness that you might not have suspected the haft of a knife concealed in its hollow, or the long N'gombi knife which was laid against the forearm. Under the crushing pressure

of Bosambo's hand, the man dropped his knife and sought to escape, for he had oiled himself that no man could hold him. But, oil or no oil, Bosambo held, and he was pushed to the ground and tied.

"Man, who sent you?" asked Bosambo.
"Lord, I was sent by Rimilaka, the chief

of the Tofolaka."

"O ko," said Bosambo. "Now, this is a state palaver, and it must go before Sandi."

The case did not go before Sanders, because on the way to the beach the man, by reason of the oil on his wrists, slipped his bonds and ran for the bush; and Bosambo, who could throw a spear with great accuracy up to fifty yards, wriggled off his cloak and sent a light lance whizzing after him.

"Now he will not talk," said Bosambo ruefully, looking down at the still figure, but I do not think he could have told us

much."

He reported the circumstances to Sanders, and went in search of Hamilton, who was making an inspection of the defences to the north of the city, but did not find him.

"I saw the white lord looking through a magic tube," said a worker in the fields. "Then he went into the bush, lord king, and he took the path which leads to the little hill looking toward Limbi."

Bosambo was troubled.

"Man, tell me this," he said. "Did Hamatini have soldiers with him?"

"No, lord, but he carried a big gun under one arm, and two little guns were strapped about his belly."

Bosambo stopped only to strengthen his escort, and went on at a trot along the bush path. He was a stranger in these parts, but with the instinct of a woodman he had taken in the lay of the country, and he went forward without error. Presently he came to the crest of the rise which looked toward Limpisi, but there was no sign of Hamilton, although it was quite clear to Bosambo that Hamilton had passed that way. He had seen the half-burnt cigarette, and twenty paces further the burnt stalk of a match, and Bosambo halted on the crest and took a rapid survey of the country. If Rimilaka had sent assassins into the land, it would not be with the sole purpose of destroying The white men would be marked for death, and there was a cold feeling in Bosambo's stomach at the thought that Hamilton might be the first victim. had reason for his distress, as he discovered,

"Let us go on," he said, and went down

the slope into the bush.

And there, a hundred paces from the crest, he found the body of a native in the middle of the path. The man was wounded, being shot through the shoulder, but what was more disconcerting than his injury, from Bosambo's point of view, was the fact that he also wore nothing but a breech cloth and his body was heavily oiled.

A few feet away from him in the grass lay a replica of the knife which Bosambo had taken from the other assassin. Bosambo turned over the wounded man, but he was unconscious. There was no time to be lost. Bosambo raced along the path and came to a second man, who was sitting with his back to a tree and his jaw hanging, dead. had been shot, apparently, whilst he was standing with his back to the tree, and had slid down into his present position. glance Bosambo gave, and then ran on. He had not far to go. In a small clearing he found Hamilton's helmet, battered and blood-stained, and a third wounded man; but this time it was no assassin, but one of the Old King's Guard in all the panoply of his office. He was bleeding from the breast, and had evidently been shot at short range, for his flesh was burnt. bullet, however, had done little harm, except to leave him unconscious, and his groans betokened rather his fear than his pain.

Bosambo jerked him to his feet and put the needle point of his fighting spear under

the man's chin.

"Now speak, you," said Bosambo, "or, by death, you will never speak again!

Where is the white lord?"

"Chief," said the warrior, who had evidently not heard of Bosambo's promotion, "the white lord is gone, having been taken and marked."

"Taken and marked, O fool? What do

you mean?" asked Bosambo.

"He has been taken for the Old Woman's meat," said the man. "For he came running along here, and we heard his little gun say ha-ha, and certain low men who followed him died; but we were waiting in the bushes, and when he came up to us, we fell on him and struck him down. Me he killed with his little gun because of my bravery in facing him."

Bosambo, a-quiver with grief, was silent.

"How long since, man?"
"Lord," said the soldier, "the shadow of the trees was on that stone."

Bosambo looked and made a rough

calculation. It had happened an hour before; it was madness to continue the pursuit with his small force.

"This is a bad palaver, man," he said.

"You will come to Sandi."

"Lord, I cannot walk because of my great hurt," said the warrior.

"You will walk or die," said Bosambo

curtly, and the man walked.

Sanders heard the news with a white, drawn face, and paced the deck of the Zaire, his hands clasped behind him, his chin on his breast. Presently he spoke.

"Bosambo, you shall sit on this ship, and you shall be as I am in my place, all

men obeying you."

Bones came out from his cabin at that moment, and there was nothing that was humorous in his expression, for a hard light was in his eyes, and his mouth was set as no man had seen the mouth of Bones

"We'll want a dozen men, Bones," said Sanders. "We had better take rifles and a

box of Mills bombs."

"They're in the boat, sir," said Bones. "I'll take a few of your own men for carriers, Bosambo," said Sanders; "I can't trust these other devils. Send them to me.

We will go ashore together."

A quarter of an hour after he landed he had begun his march, the party moving off in single file, Sanders leading, Bones walking

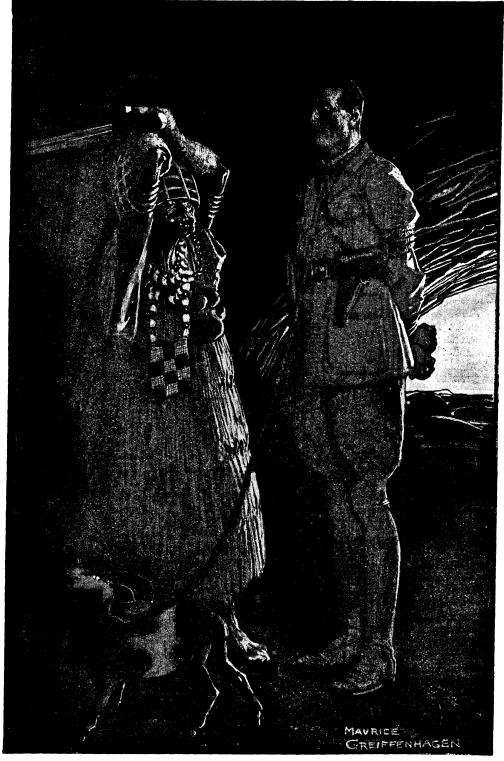
"I warned Hamilton about making these solitary surveys," said Sanders, and those were the only words he spoke in the twenty-

mile march they made before sunset.

Sanders had much to think about, and as he walked he pieced together the fragments of information he had received about his enemy. This only he knew—that in a vast cave, the mouth being very wide, but so low that at its highest entrance a tall man must stoop to go in, lived the Old Woman of Limbi, who had no name but Death, and no family but the fierce leopards which roamed in the forest, who were like her, for they loved killing for killing's sake, and were dainty feeders.

No man remembered the establishment of the Old Woman in her wonderful position. Tottering fathers of grandfathers told how, as children, they were told of her by other totterers, but none remembered her coming.

It is said that on the day Ferguson, the missionary, was chopped by her ordersfor he had preached against her—she spoke to the captain of soldiers Mofolobo, having



"Then in the gloom he saw a figure in straw, and caught the bright gleam of her sword as she came toward him."

come down to see with her own eyes the destruction of the missionary's house.

"Mofolobo," she said, "I see you, and I know that you are the son of Dabobo, who was the son of Kafu, who was the son of Tifilini, who was the son of K'Nema. And K'Nema I knew, also his mother."

That made her at least a hundred.

No living man had seen her face, for she lived alone in her great and lofty cave, and grew in strength on the blood of her victims. At so often she called for sacrifice, and they brought to the mouth of the cave a girl or a young man, their hands roped behind them and their feet haltered. And they bound round the waist of The Marked a heavy sword which had never been used in war, and round the neck of the sacrifice was a rope, to the end of which was a young kid, this being for the propitiation of certain local ghosts and ju-jus which had their home with the Old Woman. Into the cave the sacrifice was pushed and met the Old Woman. . . .

Then the tottering figure in the straw coat and the fantastic mask would come out with her wet sword and sprinkle the shivering crowd. Only on such days were common people allowed to pass the cordon of the virgins who guarded the hill. Who these virgins were, and how they were recruited, Sanders could never discover. Indeed, it was very difficult to find anybody who would discuss the Old One or her retinue. This much he did find out—that the tchu of the Old Woman had no association with the virgin guard, nor did she pass from the mountain by any known route. suspected a secret way to the cave, and put the tchu as a victim who had been spared by the Old Woman to attend upon her. The fact that the girl he had seen had been marked for sacrifice supported his likely theory. But Hamilton had not been so marked.

Late in the afternoon he made his camp by the side of a little stream four miles north of the village, which, for the information it supplied, might not have existed. None had seen the white man nor the Old King's guard, and when he spoke of the Old Woman of Limbi, they were dumb. Hamilton had been brought through here, however, There were distinct markings of a booted foot in the dust at the entrance to the village.

Sanders marched again at midnight, taking the forest path. He had requisitioned a man of the village to guide him, and,

carrying a lantern, he swung ahead on the heels of the guide. Once a lion crossed their path, and unexpectedly, for this beast is not seen to the west or south of the mountain. It was a male lion, and stood only for a few seconds lashing its tail and roaring in fear—for the lion is a coward—then leapt into the bush, and they heard no more of him. They saw a leopard, too, but the great cat was scared of the light, and the glimpse of his spotted skin was only momentary.

At daybreak they came to the village of P'pie, which is at the foot of Limpisi, the last three hours of the march having been uphill. They were now in the most northerly portion of the Rimi-Rimi country. They were also in touch with the Old King's guard, and there was a little skirmish in the forest, which Sanders had hoped to avoid. He wanted to meet the Old Woman and talk to her. He knew how impossible was his task with the small force at his disposal and without the support which the Zaire's guns could give him—impossible, that is, if it came to war.

Bones went out to reconnoitre the land before the sun fell, and came back haggard and tired. The land rose abruptly, he reported, to an extensive terrace about five miles wide, above which, as abruptly, rose another terrace, and on this last plateau was the Old Woman's cave.

"There's a hill about twelve miles to the left which would put us as near to the second terrace as it is possible to get," said Bones.

"Can the terraces be forced?" asked Sanders.

Bones shook his head.

"Quite impossible, sir," he said quietly.
"I saw a camp of three regiments of the Old King's guard, and the terrace walls are precipices three or four hundred feet high. I suppose there's some sort of path, but it's pretty sure to be well guarded."

Sanders nodded.

"I sent out a message to the guard by one of the villagers, asking for a passage through and telling my peaceful intentions. They sent back my messenger—and he was not nice to look at," said Sanders grimly. "We shall have to take the hill. Apparently the ceremony is to-morrow."

Bones jerked his chin.

"We'll have to start at midnight," he said. "It's not a long way, but it's a very stiff climb"

The two men did not speak about their

missing comrade. Bones drank a cup of tea and looked away from Sanders, and the same fear was in each heart.

As for Hamilton, the story which the wounded soldier had told was very near the truth. He had been surprised by the hired assassins of the Tofolaka, had shot two, and had run—straight into the party which had been sent to kidnap him. And the rest of the story was the story of a long, hot walk, amidst men who did not speak to him, who answered none of his questions, but who did not ill-treat him.

Even whilst Bones was reconnoiting the first terrace, Hamilton was walking slowly up a steep zigzag path that led to its top. The path gave evidence of having been cut from the solid rock, and Hamilton was glad to throw himself upon the ground when he reached the top, and rest his bruised and weary limbs. Here he met a chief who was sufficiently important to talk, one Okaso.

Throughout his journey Hamilton had noticed one curious fact—that the men who guarded him had shown no enmity to him, had practised none of the minor cruelties which vicious men practise quietly upon those they hate, but had treated him with civility, and now the attitude of the chief was no less courteous.

"O chief," said Hamilton, when he saw the man coming toward where he lay, his

bonds having been removed.

"O Amatini," said the chief, "I see you." And, despite his tragic position, Hamilton smiled to hear that title, though knew how quickly the names of strangers ran from one end of the country to the other. $\,$

"This is a bad palaver, Okaso," said Hamilton. "Tell me why the Old Woman desires me."

" Lord, who knows?" said Okaso, squatting down opposite him. "She is too wonderful for me. But I think you were marked."

Hamilton shook his head.

"Then one was marked for you," said the other philosophically. "It matters little, and this is the word of the Old Womanthat you are her meat, and one came to me giving orders to send my soldiers to bring you and the two white lords and Bosambo, the king. For when the sun comes up, Amatini, then that is the Day of Looking, when common people may look upon the Old Woman's face and die."

"To-morrow's dawn," said Hamilton

reflectively. "Well, who knows that this is not good ? "

"It had better be good," said Okaso significantly, "for it will be! Lord, every year one goes, and sometimes more, to the cave of death. That is why our crops are good and the land is prosperous. Every year goes a maiden or a man, but only goats in milk have gone in these late days, for the Old Woman does not, perhaps, eat so much blood, being so old.'

In the morning, when the stars were still in the sky, they wakened Hamilton from a deep sleep, and he got up and bathed his face in the pool. Then they set out across the narrow plain, and presently came to a higher wall of rock. But here the path up the face of the cliff was more gentle, and he reached the top fresh to meet his doom.

The ledge of the second terrace was not more than a quarter of a mile broad, and he saw the cave, a longitudinal slit in the face of the rock that looked like a black, leering mouth. They tied his hands behind him with especial care, and then came Okaso, who, to Hamilton's surprise, buckled about his waist his revolver belt with the two long-barrelled automatics, and he could see the ten spare magazines bulging in the pocket.

"O Okaso, why do you do this?"

"Lord," said the man, "that is the Old Woman's way. For when a warrior is taken in arms for the Old Woman's pleasure, his spears and his fine sword he wears upon him. And the Old Woman told me this, I lying on my belly at the mouth of the cave for fear of her terrible eyes: 'Let the white man come with his little guns that I may And thus it is." He looked see them.' round. "O lord," he said, "speak well for me to M'shimba M'shamba, and all holy devils and ghosts that walk upon the mountains, and the terrible brothers of Bimbi, who eat the moon."

He stepped back and slipped a noose about Hamilton's neck, and to the end of the rope

was fastened a young goat.

"Now, I do not think, Amatini, that my young men need prick you with their spears."

"That is true talk," said Hamilton

gravely, "for I am a soldier."

And he walked with steady steps to the mouth of the cave, peering in and seeing nothing. He stopped only for a second at the very opening, and then, lowering his head, he walked in.

He saw nothing and heard nothing save the bleating of a little kid tugging at the rope about his neck, and then in the gloom he saw a figure in straw, and caught the bright gleam of her sword as she came toward him. He lifted his head erect as the sword rose, and closed his eyes. He heard, but did not feel, the swish of the blade as it fell, cutting through flesh and bone, then darkness came upon him. . . .

On the crest of the hill two men lay watching. They saw Hamilton walk into the cave, and waited, not daring to breathe. Then from the mouth of the cave staggered the ghastly figure in her shapeless straw jacket. She brandished in her hand a

sword that glittered like silver in the morning sunlight, and there was on that sword a thick red stain. Through his glasses Sanders saw and groaned. He heard a grunt at his side. Bones was cuddling the stock of his rifle, and the muzzle was as steady as a rock. Before he could fire, Sanders's hand fell upon the weapon and twisted it round.

"Bones," he said gently, "there is still work for you and me. If you shoot, the guard can reach the base of this hill long

before we can."

Bones stared stupidly from Sanders to the cave and the shambling figure, sprinkling the prostrate guard with bright red drops, then laid his face on the crook of his arm and cried bitterly.

The ninth story in this series will appear in the next number.



SUMMER MOONLIGHT.

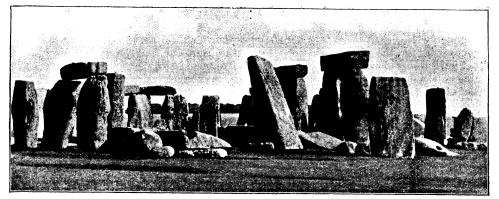
TWO lovers talking, In the green woods walking, Wandering here and there beneath the trees,

Telling thoughts long hidden, Now to rise unchidden And mingle with the whispers of the breeze.

Here the moonlight traces Wondrous shadowy laces All across the dim and mossy ground;

Here the owls are stirring,
And night-jars faintly chirring,
While the moon moves on without a sound.

BARBARA DRUMMOND.



GENERAL VIEW SHOWING THE "LEANING STONE" AND OTHER DETAIL AS IT WAS TWENTY YEARS AGO.

THE RESTORATION OF STONEHENGE

By HAROLD J. SHEPSTONE

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CHARACTERISTIC of modern thought is the increasing desire to look backwards and appreciate the work of generations which have long passed away. This is evidenced by the keen interest shown by the general public in the wonderful monuments erected by early men, of which the ruins are found to-day in various parts of the world. We have come to recognise the need for their preservation, and welcome any light which the archæologist and the antiquarian can throw upon them, for in some cases we do not even know the date of their creation or for what purpose they were designed.

This is particularly true of Stonehenge, that strange and mysterious conglomeration of stones which adorns one of the ridges on Salisbury Plain, in the South of England. In the first place, it is unlike any other monument. It cannot be compared, for instance, to the stone menhirs of Carnac, in Brittany; to the ancient fortress of Grimspound, on Dartmoor: or to the cromlechs found in Cornwall and other parts of Britain. Stonehenge has a distinction, a romance, and a mystery all its own. It has excited the interest of men for centuries; yet, despite all the study and research which

have been expended upon it, its origin is still wrapped in mystery. We do not know for certain who reared it, or when or for what purpose it was conceived, except that evidence would point to its being some kind of worshipping place. Then there is the mystery concerning its "blue" or foreign stones. Whence did they come, and how were they brought to the site?

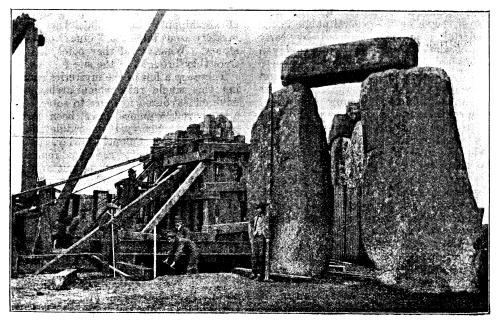
These are a few of the mysteries concerning this single ruin which archæologists have endeavoured for ages to solve. Over a thousand volumes have been written upon Stonehenge, yet the riddle remains unanswered. As Colonel Hawley, the wellknown antiquarian, recently remarked: "Stonehenge is the hardest nut any antiquarian ever had to crack." It is at once Britain's oldest \mathbf{and} most mysterious monument, and the fact that it has now passed from private ownership into the possession of the British nation, and is being preserved by engineers and antiquarians, makes a reference to it of more than timely interest.

It was just before the Armistice that Sir Cecil Chubb—who purchased Stonehenge in 1915 from the family of Sir Edmund Antrobus, of Amesbury Abbey, who had held the property for many years—generously presented it to the British nation, together with thirty acres of land. The work of restoration is being carried out by the Office of Works, under the direction of Sir Frank Baines, the Director of Works. He is being assisted in his task by the Society of Antiquaries, who have a representative on the spot, and who are hoping, as a result of the excavations which are being made, to learn something of the early history of this remarkable pile of stones. While the cost of the purely engineering side of the undertaking is being borne by the Government, the expense of the excavation work-no small item-by which alone we can look for a solution of its many mysteries, falls entirely upon the Society of Anti-quaries, a private institution. They are certainly to be congratulated on the bold manner in which they have tackled the problem. When the Inspector of Ancient Monuments reported that the task of straightening the stones ought to be put in hand at once, the Society entered into an arrangement with the Office of Works whereby extensive excavations could be carried out-an arrangement which is working quite satisfactorily. Very wisely the Society appointed Colonel Hawley to represent their interests, and he is to-day superintending the excavation work. He is a well-known archæologist, and a few years ago did some excellent work among the ruins of Old Sarum, the old Celtic stronghold close by. He has been assisted in his task by Mr. Newall, who is also an

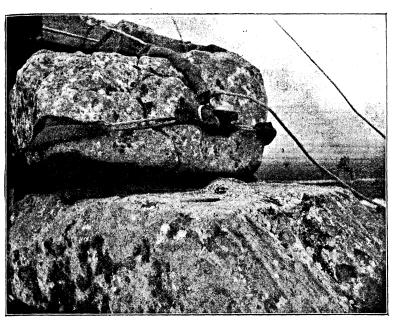
expert archæologist.

When first erected by the early Britons, Stonehenge must have presented a striking and awe-inspiring sight in the midst of what was then open, rolling country. To-day civilisation is rapidly approaching it, an aerodrome having been erected, during the War, within a hundred yards or so of it. This modern structure rather dwarfs it, and somewhat removes the isolation which has always enshrined it. As a consequence, the ordinary visitor, approaching it by motorcar from Salisbury or Amesbury, is apt to be a little disappointed. But once within the circle the feeling of disappointment gives place to one of wonder, and the vast blocks of stone begin to exercise the mind with a hundred puzzling "whys" and " wherefores."

In a sense, too, the rapid transit from the delicate and refined early English beauties of the cathedral at Salisbury to the rude barbaric force of Stonehenge is apt to be unsettling to the eye. It is a sudden transition from civilisation to the primeval savage. And yet the same impulse, probably, that set the cathedral where it stands in the valley reared these monoliths on the plain—the stimulus of religion.



MOVING STONE NO. 6 UPRIGHT BY MEANS OF SCREW-JACKS.



DOWELS ON TOP OF UPRIGHT STONE, AND THE LINTEL READY TO BE LIFTED

Though at first sight Stonehenge appears to be a confused mass of stones, it is by no means difficult to reconstruct it and learn its original plan—at all events, as far as the stones which still remain will permit. Many of the stones, particularly the smaller ones, have disappeared. They have been carried off by unscrupulous persons and used in building local bridges and in making roads. Even the souvenir hunter has laid them under contribution.

But one cannot view the remains of Stonehenge to-day without marvelling at the ingenuity of those early Britons. When it is remembered that it was probably built between 3500 and 4000 years ago, and that some of the stones turn the scale at thirty and forty tons apiece, it is clear that it represented, in its age, a great and momentous undertaking. Those early builders knew nothing about cranes and possessed only the crudest tools, yet they transported and erected blocks heavier than those found in our great cathedrals or other mighty edifices.

As to the monument itself, it is a complicated structure of earthworks, of stones arranged in circles, of stones arranged in horseshoe fashion, and of other isolated stones and earthen barrows. First comes a long avenue, running from north-east to south-west, defended by ditches on both sides. This leads to a circular earthwork

about a hundred yards across. Within this stands the real Stonehenge.

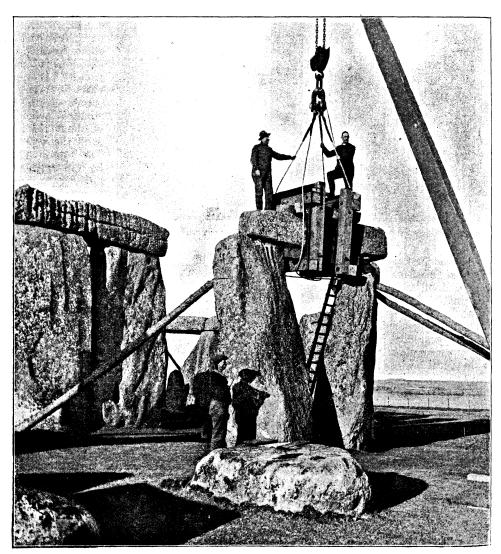
Formerly there was an outer circle of thirty upright stones, with lintels or horizontal stones resting on the tops of adjacent stones, thus forming a corona or ring of stone, at a height of about 131 feet from the ground. The stones vary both in width and thickness, but their average weight is about 25 tons. Only sixteen of these columns are now

standing upright, and only five lintels remain in position. These latter measure 9 to 10 feet in length and weigh about 6 tons. Their mortised holes rest on caps or dowels which hold them in position. All the blocks composing this circle are known as "sarsen," or local stones. They were undoubtedly fashioned from sandstone boulders which abounded in the neighbourhood.

Within this outer wall, and almost forming a lining to it, stood another circle of stones. Only six of the monoliths are now standing, while nine are lying overthrown, and some twenty or more, which completed the circle, have disappeared. The blocks which formed this inner circle are different to the others. They are much darker in colour, and are known as "bluestones," or "foreign" stones, as some call them. It is certainly impossible to match them within a hundred miles of Stonehenge. There is, however, an identical stone in Pembrokeshire, in Wales. It is thought by many that those seen at Stonehenge must have come from here. But how such heavy blocks were transported nearly two hundred miles across rough, open country, we do not know. On this point archæologists are divided into two schools, one contending that they are boulders deposited on or near the site during the Ice Age, while others maintain that they were dragged to the ridge by human agency.

From the large amount of chippings which have been found by the present excavators, it is evident they were dressed on the spot. This would indicate that they were found in the neighbourhood, as it is natural to conclude that they would have been roughly

of these trilithons was formed of enormous "sarsen" stones, and the inner or smaller of "bluestones." These structures must have formed the most imposing portion of Stone-thenge. Of the stones that formed the five great trilithons of the outer horseshoe, only



LINTEL ENCASED IN TIMBER BAULKS READY FOR REMOVAL.

fashioned before transportation in order to lighten the load.

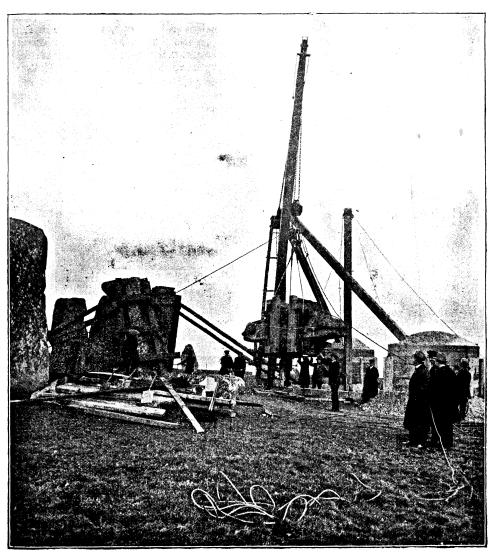
Within these two circles of stones came two horseshoe erections in the form of what archæologists call trilithons—that is, two stones planted upright side by side, like two posts of a door, with a third placed across the top after the fashion of a lintel. One

six are standing. One, towering 21 feet above the ground, was straightened in 1901. On its summit can be seen the point or "tenon" which served to hold the lintel or cap stone in its place. Only two lintels remain in position on these trilithons. The single posts vary in height from 18 to 20 feet, and weigh about 40 tons. Their lintels are about 14 feet long.

and turn the scale at 10 tons apiece. The smaller horseshoe erection consisted of fifteen stones, averaging 8 feet in height, of which only ten remain.

Besides these regular structures, there are scattered remains. Inside the inner circle

trilithon. Just outside the outer circle, but lying within the centre line or axis of the monument, is another large single monolith known as the Slaughter or Slaughtering Stone, purely fanciful names. Beyond it, again, lies another single stone known as the

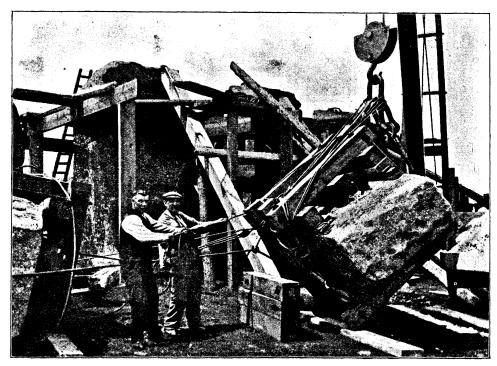


LOWERING THE LINTEL FROM OFF STONES NOS. 6 AND 7.

one large stone lies prone, and is known as the Altar Stone, so named because it is believed by many that upon it animal and probably human sacrifices were made. It rests immediately in front of the largest of the detached trilithons, on the centre line or axis of the monument. It is now partly concealed by two fragments of the fallen Hele or Sun Stone. It is a block 16 feet in length in a rather curious leaning position. It has been called the Sun Stone from the fact that anyone standing by the Altar Stone would first see the morning sun appear above the horizon at this point. Upon it the first rays of the sun would fall on Midsummer Day, therefore it is the Sun Stone. The other

appellation is derived from a curious legend which says that when the great enemy was raising Stonehenge, he muttered: "No one would ever know how it was done." A passing friar, however, heard his words, and retorted: "That is more than thee can tell." As he fled for his life, the enemy flung a great stone after him, but hit only the friar's heel, hence the block is often referred to as "The Friar's Heel" or "Hele Stone." On the map here given the more heavily shaded portions indicate those stones remaining in position when the monument

fashioned and then brought to the desired spot. No doubt they were dragged on rollers, hundreds of workers being harnessed together for such a feat. They were then placed in position by digging a hole in the chalk rock. One side of the hole was perpendicular, and the other sloping. The great stone was brought to the hole and slipped over the slope, then it was raised into position with levers made of treetrunks and with ropes. Finally it was packed up with rubble and stones. Thus the uprights were erected.



TURNING A LINTEL ON ITS SIDE, FELT PACKING BEING USED WITHIN THE TIMBER CRADLE.

became the property of the nation, and the lighter ones the overthrown monoliths; the black ones represent the "blue" stones.

Stonehenge was indeed a mighty and wonderful monument. The quantity of stone requisitioned by those early builders to create this strange monument totalled many thousands of tons, sufficient for the erection of a modern bridge or skyscraper. In the outer circle alone 930 tons of stone were needed. One wonders how the ancient Britons handled such heavy blocks. Even if we admit—which was probably the case—that the stones were boulders, and found near the site, they had, nevertheless, to be

Then came the harder task of the lintels. These were raised gradually by underbuilding or wedging first one and then the other until the stones were level with the top of the imposts; then they were pushed by levers into their proper place—a long and weary task. But there were willing hands in abundance, and logs for rollers, and ropes of hide, and earth to make mounds and inclines, so it was done.

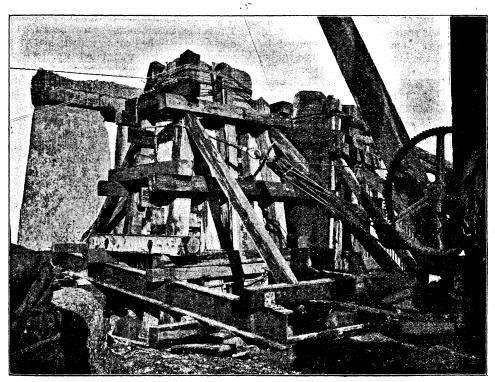
To-day the modern reconstructor of Stonehenge is using powerful cranes and the latest engineering appliances. He has found it necessary to do so, and, even so equipped, admits that the task is no light one. The

work is being carried out in a most thorough and systematic manner. First a minute survey was made of each stone, and the smallest crack or crevice on any one of them noted. These cracks are being left for the present. They will be attended to later, the question of the moment being how to save the stones without doing anything to spoil or alter their looks. After the survey the stones were numbered, a powerful crane erected, and the work of actual reinstatement put in hand.

Attention was first paid to two stones in

set to work. Not only is it cradled in thick baulks of timber, but every cranny is filled up and padded with felt and wedges, and the whole framework is again supported by struts and steel joists.

The base of the pillar was now laid bare in order to make a new bed for the monolith. The ground round the base was outlined into squares of twelve inches for a distance of three or four feet. Inside these squares the earth was taken out to a depth of six inches at a time and passed through a sieve. The purpose here is to salve any object which



TIMBER CRADLE ROUND NO. 7 STONE.

the outer circle which were leaning at a dangerous angle. The lintel across the top, which turned the scale at about six tons, was first carefully enclosed in timber baulks and thick layers of felt, so that it would not be damaged in any way. It was then lifted by the crane and lowered carefully to the ground. In order that the two pillars should not be damaged, they, like the lintel, were protected by timber baulks and felt. Never was the most precious of babies more carefully wrapped up than is one of the monoliths before the jacks which force it into its rightful position are

would throw light upon the actual origin of the monument. Roman and old English coins, numerous stone implements, bits of ancient pottery, and wooden stakes driven into the earth for the purpose, presumably, of keeping the stones upright, have been excavated. It has been found that these huge posts, which stand from 13½ to 20 feet above the ground, and weigh between 20 and 40 tons apiece, were usually set in the earth to a depth of only four or six feet. With such crude foundations it is wonderful how well the stones have stood.

Then came the more delicate work of

preparing a new foundation for the monoliths and jacking them back into an upright position. The timber baulks in which the great blocks were enclosed serve a double purpose. Apart from preventing them from being damaged in any way, they act as cradles for holding them while new foundations are being prepared. As soon as the new bed was ready, the pillars were gradually moved back into a perpendicular position by means of jacks placed under the joists or steel girders attached to the projecting framework. Before the jacks could be used, however, it was necessary to prevent any chance of the stones slipping down in their cradles. Two steel ropes were placed under each pillar and secured by eyebolts to the lowest baulks of the timber As soon as the posts were jacked into an upright position, the lintel was swung up and lowered upon them. The measurements had been so carefully made that the lintels fitted their "caps," and needed very little adjustment afterwards.

A quantity of reinforced concrete was now placed round all sides of the stones in a long and broad continuous trench, and brought nearly up to the ground level, but allowing sufficient depth for turf and a bed of mould below it. When all was set firm, the lintel was again raised so that the dowels could receive leaden caps, which had been cast in plaster moulds made from exact models. Thus the intervening space between the dowels and the caps which had been weathered away was filled up. So well

has the work been done that visitors, after asking which stones have been put right, exclaim that they can see no difference, they look so natural.

While this giant surgery that is being practised on the monoliths is a wonderful thing to see, there is something else happening at Stonehenge, less spectacular, but, to the archæologist, still more exciting. One by one, at an interval

exciting. One by one, at an interval of about seven paces from one another, a whole ring of newly-discovered holes has been laid bare just inside the earthwork which surrounds Stonehenge. An old map, dated 1666, gave the clue to their existence. showed certain—now vanished—depressions in the turf, and the excavators determined to ascertain what they meant. Equipped with a heavy steel bar with a sharp point, they began their search. Once they found the first hole, the others soon The steel bar, instead of enfollowed. countering hard chalk, went right through. The turf was turned back, and there, with

So far twenty-three holes have been laid bare, and they are known as "Aubrey's Holes," after the antiquarian who investigated Stonehenge in 1666. They run in the

all the fascinating accuracy of a puzzle.

was the hole just where it ought to be.



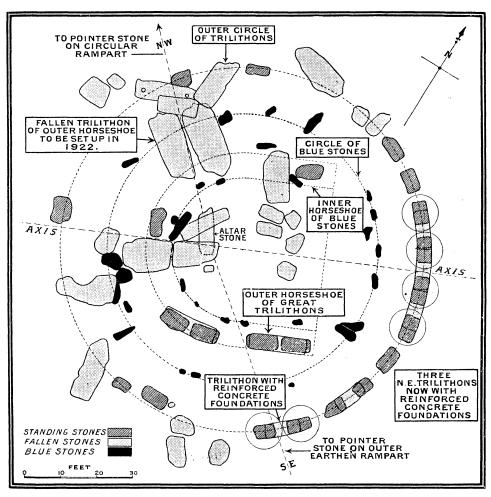
PLASTER CASTS OF DOWELS AND DOWEL HOLES ON STONES NOS. 6 AND 7.

framework. The stones were now practically slung upon the girders, the steel slings taking the weight.

The chalk bed in which the posts rested was now dug out and replaced by a 12-inch bed of reinforced concrete extending up to the original level, carefully calculated beforehand. After a sufficient time had been allowed for the concrete to harden, the stones were lowered upon it. Then followed the most intricate part of the undertaking—getting the stone into its original perpendicular position. This was gradually accomplished by means of the screw-jacks placed under the girders. Four jacks were requisitioned, and they were turned by signals. Thus gradually, just a fraction of an inch at a time, the huge blocks were pushed back into their rightful position.

form of a circle, spaced almost 16 to 17 feet apart. Not half of the circle, however, has been covered, fifty-six of these depressions having been located in the circle, while there are four others close by, making sixty in all.

The holes that have been uncovered vary in depth from three to five feet, and are from three to five feet in diameter. A careful examination reveals the fact that they once these holes now. It may be that the now prone Slaughter Stone, which lies outside Stonehenge proper, once belonged to this newly-found circle. It appears that at some period these holes were used as burial or cremation places, for there have been found in each of them a quantity of burnt human bones. So does the mystery of Stonehenge deepen.



PLAN OF STONEHENGE, SHOWING THE STONES RENDERED SECURE.

The stones dealt with in the recent work are ringed round with circles, denoting that their security has been attained by the addition of reinforced concrete foundations. Stones 6 and 7 are the two ringed stones on the S.E. line from the centre of the circle.

held stones, not of the size of the huge monoliths, but yet of a good size, and if that be so, then outside the two circles of trilithons and the two horseshoes there was yet another ring, and this was perhaps there before Stonehenge as it is known to-day was built. There are no stones in any of The Slaughter Stone has been uncovered, and found to be tooled, as was the case with all the stones comprising the trilithons. The "old ground levels" revealed in excavation almost point to its having been buried in the earth. Possibly it was a spare stone which some distant Clerk of the Works wished to

hide, since he could find no use for it. From beneath this stone came a notable object—a sealed bottle of port wine, dating from the early days of the nineteenth century, if the bottle be any indication of date. Perhaps some former excavator left it snugly hidden as a surprise for a future generation, or he may have forgotten it. Unfortunately the cork had deteriorated, and much of the contents was lost.

It was a year ago that excavation work was begun at Stonehenge, and there is still much to be done. To-day only six of the bases of the stones have been examined, and a portion of the Aubrey Holes and Slaughter Stone uncovered. It is certainly to be hoped that, as the work proceeds, the excavators will alight upon something which will once and for all settle the vexed questions which generation after generation has essayed to answer, namely, the date and purpose of the monument.

It has been ascribed to builders of many ages—Phœnicians, Belgæ, Romans, Romano-British, Saxons, Druids, and Danes. Some have declared it was a Buddhist temple, others a fortress, or a racing ground—with a queer grand stand, in truth!—or a meaningless pile which the Romans compelled the Britons to build, in order to keep them quiet. The theories which have been advanced are endless.

It is certainly significant, however, that the present excavators, like their predecessors, have failed to discover any metals. Nothing of this nature has ever been unearthed at Stonehenge except a small piece of copper. But stone implements have been found in plenty by past as well as by the present excavators. This naturally leads many scholars to conclude that this mysterious monument was reared when early man in Britain still used tools of stone and when metals were barely known. That takes us back to sixteen or eighteen centuries before the birth of Christ, making Stonehenge somewhere between 3500 and

4000 years of age. Sir Norman Lockyer, the astronomer, on purely astronomical grounds places the date as somewhere between 1900 and 1400 B.C. A view that is gaining ground—though here, again, is but theory—is that it was erected by a race of roundheaded (Brachycephalic) settlers who came to Britain towards the end of the Neolithic Period. The popular notion that it was built by the Druids does not bear investigation, for when they appeared in Britain, not only copper, but bronze and iron were known and used.

It is certainly strange that while we know the approximate date of nearly all the world's great ruins, we cannot with certainty fix that of Stonehenge. It is equally true to say that we have no definite knowledge, either, as to the use to which it was put. It can hardly have been reared as a monument to some mighty chief, for no honoured dead was ever laid to rest beside the Altar Stone. The discovery, however, of animal bones in the past round the Altar Stone, and the unearthing of both animal and burnt human bones by the present excavators inside the earthwork, would go to show that it was probably a temple, or worshipping place, of the early Britons, and that these bones were those of the victims of the sacrifices. With these some primeval priest conciliated his deity. But what god it was that the early Britons worshipped amid these stones we cannot at present say.

Now that Stonehenge has become the property of the nation, and is being restored under the guidance of expert engineers and archæologists, it is certainly to be hoped that some light will be thrown on these much - discussed problems. As already stated, they have been on the ground a year, but so colossal is the task that another year, and perhaps two, will expire before their work is finally completed. By that time the riddle of Stonehenge may be solved.

GREY FLANNELS

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WALLIS MILLS

AT the request of a troubled hand-maiden, the manageress of "The Falcon" pushed open the door of the coffee-room and entered. She carried with her a large bunch of keys, which tinkled musically as she walked, like a peal of little bells. One heard her before one saw her, and half expected to behold a sylphlike creature with a wand and a surprising penchant for converting the less attractive kinds of fauna into ready-made princes.

But there was nothing fairylike about Miss Higginson. She was strong, she was capable, a born manageress, one who regarded her fellow-creatures with a sort of stern pessimism, and was without sympathy for the failings of the like of you

and me.

Dunstall sat smoking a cigarette over the remains of his lunch, using the sweet plate for an ash-tray. He was a tall, slimly-built young man of pleasing aspect, having a mop of bronze hair and the straight profile of the ancient Greek. But Miss Higginson's heart melted towards him not a whit. From her earliest years she had learned to associate good looks with a tendency towards assorted sins.

"I think you wished to see me," she said. Miss Higginson's manner was not what one might sneeringly describe as "genteel." Diaphanous affectations of speech were not for her. She spoke like a University don in

a very bad temper.

Dunstall, shy, nervous, acutely conscious of his predicament, felt his colour change as if he were a chameleon on a piece of bright red velvet. Never had he met anybody so grim or so depressingly ladylike.

"Er-yes," he said.

Miss Higginson said nothing. She knew already what was coming, but she would not help him out with so much as a syllable.

"Fact is," said Dunstall, with half a laugh, when the silence grew intolerable—"er—frightfully sorry and all that, but I haven't any money."

"I understand you have had lunch."

"Yes, thanks. Afraid I owe you sixteen and threepence altogether. I see it comes to that, with a bottle of Beaune, a Kümmel, and a coffee. If you could cash a cheque for me—"

"That," said Miss Higginson icily, "is altogether against the rules of the establish-

ment."

"In that case," said Dunstall apologetically, "we're both well in the cart, aren't we?"

Miss Higginson's frown would have wilted a taxi-driver.

"Were you unaware that you had no money when you ordered this very ample meal?"

"Of course I was. Now I ask you! (If you don't mind my explaining.) You observe the staff and scrip of the pilgrim? Good. Pilgrimages, having fallen into desuetude along wth ping-pong, roller-skating, and other mediæval recreations, you will perhaps believe me when I state that I am on a common or garden walking tour. I shall now have to fatigue you with some of my political opinions."

"Surely that will not be necessary."

"Now, look here, are you telling this story or am I? To resume. I'm a bit of a Socialist—rather a dangerous sort of chap. You don't know the accompaniment of 'The Red Flag,' I suppose? Ah, that's a pity, because I could have sung it to you. Again to resume. I met, while walking this morning, a home ambassador of the Cause—coarsely described by some as a tramp. He and I sat on the same gate together and discussed the brotherhood of man, the

federation of the world, and the inspiring deeds of our Russian comrades. After much elevating talk we went our respective ways, and—er—I learned never again to keep my note-case in the side-pocket of my coat.'

"You mean the tramp robbed you?"

said the woman of few words.

"The practical Socialist has an obvious advantage over the mere theorist. nearly as I can ascertain, my comrade of the highway stung me for eleven pounds ten. It happens to be all I had with me. What is the next move?"

"I can only demand your name and address," said Miss Higginson, in a tone which suggested regret that penal servitude

was not the usual award.

"And I send you the money? Right! But I say, y'know, suppose I give you a

stumer name and address?"

"Such things have occurred in my ex-The law compels me to trust you. If you did such a thing, you would render yourself liable to a criminal charge."

"Now, that's just the point. You've got to trust me one way: why not another? Why not take my cheque for a pound, give me the change, and thereby enable me to wire to my bank. It's only an extra threeand-ninepence you'd stand to lose."

"Because it is strictly against the rules of the establishment. I do not know you, and I should be held liable if your cheque

were dishonoured."

Dunstall passed a hand over his mop of hair and gazed thoughtfully out of the window. The situation was rapidly becoming less and less pleasant. Unhappy is the lot of him who finds himself bereft of money in a small provincial town. Suddenly his eyes alighted on a decoration overhanging a shop-front on the far side of the road.

"Pardon me," he said, "but is not that shop over there one of those establishments in which the financially embarrassed matron may borrow ninepence on a flat-iron to tide her over the dark days when the bread-

winner is out on strike?"

"Are you asking me if it is a pawnbroker's ! I----"

"Ah, I see I am right! I was so careless as not to bring a flat-iron with me, but I have a watch. If you will excuse me for two or three minutes, I will go and have speech with the usurer."

She stood at the window and watched him go. She saw him cross the road and disappear down an alley beside the shop, leading to the discreet side-entrance of the dingv

office in which the true worth of so many wedding gifts had been disclosed.

To pawn something for the first time is a unique sensation. Those who have married in a registrar's office may have caught something of a similar feeling, but it is not quite the same. Dunstall, with an unreasonable, but quite appalling, sense of guilt in his heart, found himself in a small cubby-hole strongly redolent of old clothes. In the next cubby-hole a lady's voice was imploring somebody gruff and hard-hearted to "be a nangel and make it five-and-six." The owner of the gruff voice, however, declined this high estate, and Dunstall, listening, decided that it was a harder world than he had thought.

It was his own turn next, and many unpleasant thoughts assailed him. the pawnbroker suspect that he had stolen the watch? Would he look at him long and suspiciously, and then decline to do business, or send for the police? Would he have to submit himself to a Third Degree of cross-examination?

But when the ordeal came, it was no ordeal at all. A dark, curly-haired gentleman of remote Eastern origin glided up to him and said simply "Yes?" for all the world as

if this were an everyday occurrence.

"I want to pawn my watch," said Dunstall, and handed it across. It was in his heart to add: "It really is mine, you know; I didn't steal it."

But nothing suspicious seemed to cross the other's mind. He held the watch up to the light, opened it, examined the hallmark, and weighed it in his hand. It was a gold hunter of some considerable worth, once the property of Dunstall's grandfather, and valuable as watches go. Dunstall valued it greatly for sentimental reasons.

How much?"

"Oh, I only want a couple of pounds. I shall probably relieve you of it again to-day or to-morrow."

"Two pounds. please?" Name and address,

So it was over. Dunstall gave his name and address, and the other took a pen from behind one of his capacious ears and proceeded to write upon a card.

"Got a penny for the ticket?" he asked.

"The ticket? Ah, some local entertainment, I suppose."

"Some what?"

"A penny reading, perhaps. I have heard of such. I shall not be staying in the town, but I don't mind buying a ticket, so long as it is for a good cause. The vicar will be in the chair, I dare say? A penny is so little to ask for a ticket that I can hardly——"

"I want a penny for the ticket that I'm going to give you in exchange for your watch. I don't know anything about no entertainment. Haven't you never pledged

nothing before?"

"I shall always be wanting to, after this," said Dunstall. "It is so exciting. No, I haven't a penny, I'm afraid. I hope, however, that that will not prevent our doing business."

toing business.

For answer the pawnbroker slammed on the counter a pound note, nineteen shillings and elevenpence in silver and copper, and a ticket. He was red to the roots of his hair. Dunstall clutched his booty and went.

"If anything," he murmured outside, addressing himself, "could detract from that popularity which is yours by right of your sunny smile and your winning ways, Master Dunstall, it is the unfortunate habit you have acquired of pulling people's legs."

H.

FIVE miles from the little town of Market Marcham, where Dunstall had lunched and left his grandfather's watch, is the village of Hynge. There, at The Old Grange, dwelt the Whiteheads, a large family which was ever willing to make itself larger by including Dunstall. He had known the Whiteheads all his life, had been at school with the son and heir, and had flirted at odd times with all the daughters who had arrived at the age of indiscretion.

During lunch Dunstall had debated within himself as to whether he should call upon them and thereby cause consternation to the fatted calf. He had been caught between two minds. When he discovered his financial difficulties, however, the fingerpost of necessity pointed the way. Here were kindly folk who would cash a cheque for him, give him sound advice as to his future dealings with tramps, and send him upon his way with a replenished purse. So, having paid for his lunch, he headed for Hynge.

Men who tramp the King's highway for recreation give many reasons for so doing. There is but one. Some will tell you that Romance is dead, when all the while it is the whispering of that little mad, untruthful god which sets their feet upon the road. Sometimes he comes to them in the guise of restlessness or need of exercise, but it is

Romance every time. Snatch off his mask and look into his face if you don't believe me.

Dunstall knew and pretended not to know. He had been a chronic dreamer from a child, and dreamed still. He posed as having shed all his illusions, and secretly hugged enough of them to satisfy a schoolgirl. He went always in quest of the Golden Girl, that wondrous bundle of everything that is good and witty and beautiful, she who waits for us behind every corner while we are young, and is always gone when we turn it in search of her.

Dunstall in his dreams always found her upon the road. Sometimes, in his more extravagant moods, he rescued her from footpads or infuriated cattle; at other times he was content to allow a more trivial incident to provide him with an excuse for talking to her. And Romance, with his tongue in his cheek, kept whispering: "She's there—somewhere on one of the roads—waiting for you. Go and find her."

And that afternoon he did find her surely enough, when he was but a quarter of a mile from Hynge. If she were not the loveliest girl he had ever seen, he thought she was, and it comes to the same thing. Even I, the dispassionate chronicler, must admit that she was very beautiful. She was walking towards him on the other side of the road, escorted by her small brother, aged eight.

At that time Hynge was suffering from the attentions of the County Council. A long stretch of road gleamed with new tar. Here and there were piles of flints. Every fifty yards or so was a sentry-box, in which old men brooded o' nights, poisoning themselves with coke fumes, lest some chance thief should pilfer the steam-roller or a few hundredweights of flints.

Dunstall crossed the road diagonally to obtain a closer view of the approaching girl. Perhaps the Whiteheads knew her. Secretly he hoped for some unforeseen excuse for putting himself on speaking terms with her. And the Fates gave him what he asked.

Even when we realise our dreams, the end is invariably attained in some manner otherwise than as we have planned. Dunstall had always dreamed of finding his Golden Girl in some kind of a predicament, small or great, from which he extricated her and earned proportionate thanks. But Dunstall himself was destined to provide the predicament.

An expert on tar could probably explain why there are certain kinds safe to be walked

on when fresh, and other kinds with strong glacial qualities. This kind was in the latter category, but Dunstall was not thinking about tar. It came, therefore, as a rude shock when he sat down with all the suddenness and force of a humorous acrobat. For a fraction of a second he forgot even the Golden Girl. Painful as it is to have to record it, he swore. The little boy, who had begun to laugh immoderately, controlled his mirth to listen. Then Dunstall remembered himself and bit his lip. A moment later a Vision was bending over him.

"Oh, are you hurt?" exclaimed the Vision solicitously.

"In spirit," said Dunstall. "It was the

tar, you know," he added brightly.
"Of course," agreed the Vision. "They ought to put up notices. I'm so glad you're not hurt. Can I help you up?"

Ruefully he showed her the palms of his

hands, ebony-coloured and adhesive.

"I think I'd better manage for myself, thanks very much," he said. "It's awfully good of you. I say, please mind how you go. You might have fallen down yourself."

The small brother, standing against the hedge, resumed his merrymaking. The girl turned and addressed him sharply as " Wilfred!"

"But he looks so funny!" Wilfred protested. "Oh, Joan, I do hope you're

going to fall down, too.'

But Joan was not so obliging, and reached the safety afforded by the side-path without mishap. Dunstall scrambled to his feet and followed her, cursing under his breath. In no matter what heroic light he might afterwards figure in her eyes, she would always see him tarred and slipping up, a figure of fun in which there could be nothing of sentiment.

"I'm afraid I'm in a bit of a mess," he

remarked ruefully.

"Not half," remarked Wilfred, continuing to exhibit keen delight. He stopped laughing, however, on receipt of a look of concentrated venom from Dunstall, and Joan once more administered a verbal rebuke.

"I'm afraid you really are in a terrible state," she said frankly, having glanced behind Dunstall. "I hope you haven't

far to go."

"Oh, no, only just beyond the village, thanks. I'm going to present myself thus to the Whiteheads. Perhaps you know them?"

"Why, yes." Her eyes lit up with a new

interest. "Oh, I'm awfully glad! They will be able to provide you with a change of clothes, won't they?"

"If they don't, they'll soon notice the

effect on their chairs."

They both laughed. Dunstall, still half angry, was keenly alive to the humour of the situation.

"I hope," he added, "you don't think I make a practice of this sort of thing. I don't remember having walked on tar before. We experimentalists pay heavy penalties."

She laughed again. It was good to meet a man who could laugh thus against himself.

"Excuse me," she said, "but will you be staying at The Grange?"

"I think it very likely," said Dunstall with decision-" very likely indeed."

"Then I wonder if I dare ask a favour of

"Please do. I should like you to ask a

"Those trousers won't be fit for you to wear again.''

"Only on very informal occasions."

"Well, my father is the Vicar here," she continued, "so if you really don't want them, and would send them around to me at the Vicarage, I——"

He stared at her in dumb amazement. It was bad enough that he should slip up and cover himself with wet tar in the presence of the Golden Girl, but that she should afterwards ask him for the spoilt garments was simply bathos.

"You see," she hastened to explain, "there's a jumble sale to-morrow in the schoolroom in aid of the Church Heating Fund, and I'm collecting all the old clothes I can find. I'm afraid it was rather tactless of me to ask you just now, but——"

" Not a little bit," said Dunstall cordially. "I'll send them round with pleasure, oror bring them myself. But I'm afraid they're

quite useless, aren't they?"

"Some working man will be glad to buy them for a few coppers," said Joan, "and it's in a good cause, you know. Perhaps I can fold them so that it won't show so very much. There is no commercial morality in good causes. But-I mustn't keep you chatting. You must feel dreadfully uncomfortable.'

"What a nawful man!" exclaimed Wilfred a few minutes later.

"Why, dear, I thought he was rather

"You would! Did you see the look he gived me?"

"It was very rude of you to laugh at

him, Wilfred."

- "But he looked so funny. And did you hear what he said when he fell down? He said 'Damp, damp, damp!' three times like that."
- "The tar was damp, Wilfred—that was the trouble."
- "But what was that other word he said?"
 - "I didn't hear," said Joan hastily.

" It was——"

"Wilfred!" she interrupted hastily.

"There you are! You won't let me say it. Only a nawful man would have said that. I shall tell father about him."

Joan glowered upon her small brother.

"Wilfred, you are growing up a positive little prig. It isn't funny for a grown man to fall down like that. And as to what he said—why, father himself might have said it in the circumstances."

Wilfred chuckled hugely.

"I should like to see father fall on the wet tar," he gurgled, and indulged for a moment in unfilial imagery. "But he's a nawful man, all the same," he added.

III.

"You don't mean it, though," said Jimmy Whitehead. "You pull my leg. You seize me by the ankle and exert great strength. You had better not exhibit that peculiar kind of humour of yours in the presence of my revered mother. If you do, you'll be taken at your word and jolly well hauled there."

Dunstall paused in the act of tying a black bow, and made a passive gesture.

"A willing captive," he remarked.

"But, dear old lad, have you any idea of what a jumble sale is like? If you care for that sort of thing, why don't you become a rag-picker and really enjoy life? In the name of wisdom——"

"Don't know him."

"Yes, you do—the chap with the teeth. In his name I conjure you to cease this foolery. Haven't I told you that there's a little family of four French partridges which has been terrorising the neighbourhood of late? Come out with me instead and let us rid our fair land of this deadly pest. If you want additional excitement, I can lend you an old gun which shows signs of going a bit at the breech."

"I wouldn't come," said Dunstall, "if

you promised me an arquebus. The jumble sale for me."

"Mais pourquoi? Forgive me, but I always burst into voluble French when my emotions are roused."

Dunstall surveyed the knotted bow in a mirror and patted it. Looking past his own reflection, he could see that of Jimmy Whitehead sprawling on his bed. It was just before dinner, the hour when the young man's fancy lightly turns towards sherry and bitters.

"Jimmy," said Dunstall, apostrophising the reflection, "you have no sense of humour. I want to go to that jumble sale to see what happens to my trousers, to watch the face of the poor mug who buys them, after he's examined his purchase."

"Screamin'ly funny," said Jimmy.

" Te-hee!"

"I shall afterwards repurchase them," said Dunstall, "so that neither the Church Heating Fund nor the bargain-hunter shall suffer. I will then hand them to you to be passed on to the kitchen staff, who will find them invaluable as fire-lighters."

"And you really think of spending a few

days with us, Tony?"

"Long enough to give somewhat of a tone to the household."

Jimmy Whitehead burst out laughing.
"Poor, poor old bean!" he cried. "Why
don't you own up? I know the symptoms."

"Yours," said Dunstall, "are puzzling and alarming. Hydrophobia or merely

drink?"

"Not that I blame you," the other continued, unperturbed. "I am not adamant. I, too, have had my weaknesses. There was a time when for quite a week I wandered about murmuring to myself the name Joan, thereby causing my friends to exclaim 'Arc.'"

Dunstall turned upon his friend.

"And did you have the neck to suppose even for a moment that she'd look twice at you—you, an ill-favoured, debased profligate, with all the baser instincts of the dog, and none of his nobler qualities? If you weren't my host, I should be rude to you. But as I'm wearing your ill-fitting clothes, intend sleeping in one of your comfortless beds, and am just going to poison myself with your miserable food, my gentlemanly instincts—which you are quite incapable of understanding—compel me to be courteous. Does this fin-de-siècle dinnercoat of yours fit me as badly behind as it does in front?"

Jimmy chuckled and rubbed his hands

together.

'I love to hear the enamoured giving themselves away," he remarked. "It's all right, old man—the coat's a lovely fit. I can only just see the ends of your braces. Come along down and have your poison. Ah, there is the gong! Cook's just been

uncomfortable. Well, I wish you luck, old lad. You seem to have made terrific

progress already."

"What makes you think that?" A young man infatuated is a young man of only one idea. He walks blindly into every trap set for him.

Well," said Jimmy gravely, "she's



I say!' he exclaimed. 'Awfully sorry, but I want those trousers back for a couple of minutes, if you too late. I sold them

asking the mater how much spirits of salts she ought to put in the trifle, so don't say you're not being fêted."

On the way downstairs Dunstall suddenly

gripped Whitehead by the arm.

If you say anything to embarrass me at dinner, I'll wring your neck for it," he threatened.

"My dear fellow, I, too, have my code. Never under this roof has a guest been made accepted a little offering from you already,

The Greeco-Roman exhibition bout in the hall-easily lost by Jimmy, who was helpless with merriment—was followed by a meal during which the wretched guest was not spared. The butler was asked by Jimmy if Mr. Dunstall's parcel had been sent to the Vicarage. Dunstall's condition on arrival was not unknown in the servants'

hall, and, with the jumble sale taking place on the following day, obvious conclusions had been drawn. The butler maintained gravity with some difficulty when he announced that "they—it—had been safely dispatched half an hour ago."

After urging Dunstall to have some hemlock soup, Jimmy held forth awhile, lightly and humorously, on the question of vicars' daughters, and whether or not they made good wives. He was strictly impersonal. His brothers and sisters, aided and

affair, and stand beside her in the dock? Jimmy was of the opinion that he would, the dock not being very spacious.

Dunstall, cursing below his breath, decided that he would say nothing to this light-hearted family about the incident of the tramp, and how he had been compelled to pawn his watch. They had quite enough material for offensiveness to be getting along with. He sat with a fixed smile, fortifying himself with a thought that was passing beautiful. To-morrow—in less than

twenty-four hours—he would see Joan!



"They look quite nice, folded like this. Not a scrap of tar to be seen. And anybody who turned them over mightn't notice anything in this dim, religious light."

Dunstall examined the garment which had once been his, and looked up into Joan's face.

"Bad luck on the poor fish that buys 'em," he said.

"Not a bit. I shall sell them for a few coppers. And most of the tar will come off with a little turps. Many a working man would jump at them for a shilling. Why, they look quite new!"

"They were. Best grey flannel, suitable for golf, the seaside, or country wear. Cost me two guineas. And you didn't even

say 'Tar' for them. I say, I believe there's tea going in the next room. Can't I get you

a cup?

Dunstall was conscious that he was a little in the way. Around him the rude forefathers of the hamlet, their wives, sons, daughters and in-laws, were busy shaking out garments, examining, frowning, growling, with the passion of terriers searching for rats. Joan, in charge of the men's



don't mind.' 'I'm sorry, too.' She smiled at him almost gleefully. 'You're just about a minute ago.'"

abetted by parents who should have known better, interrupted him to discourse upon Joan of Arc and that problematical prelate Pope Joan. Joan, eldest daughter of the Rev. Victor Lascelles, was also mentioned. It seemed she was in danger of arrest for being in unlawful possession of some of the County Council tar. If the hand of the law fell upon her, would Tony Dunstall be a sportsman, own to his complicity in the

clothing stall, could not give all her attention to Dunstall. Her eyes roved restlessly over the prospective purchasers. The village people were honest in the main, but not bigotedly so. Dunstall seemed to her then a pleasant fellow who was hindering business. It is not unlikely that she accepted his offer of a cup of tea so as to be rid of him for a while.

In the smaller schoolroom Mrs. Lascelles was dispensing tea, and courtesy compelled Dunstall to linger a while and exchange words with her. The Vicar, a nervous, talkative little man, was also present, in the centre of a knot of village worthies.

"But the clothes look so good," a lady who was fond of italics was saying to him. "It seems such a *shame* that they should fetch so *little*."

"I am afraid," the Vicar replied, "that most of them find their way to the pawn-shops, and are pledged for more than we sell them here."

Figuratively, Dunstall pricked up his ears. After his experience of the day before, any reference to pawnbroking could not fail to attract his attention. It started a train of thought, and suddenly, with a smothered exclamation, he turned and rushed back to the other room, forcing his way through the press of people until he found Joan.

"I say!" he exclaimed. "Awfully sorry, but I want those trousers back for a couple of minutes, if you don't mind."

couple of minutes, if you don't mind."
"I'm sorry, too." She smiled at him almost gleefully. "You're just too late. I sold them about a minute ago."

"Sold them!"

"Yes, to old Jasper Oaks, the village atheist. He came to scoff and remained to purchase. Why, what did you want?"

"Oh—er—nothing, thanks."

"Was it something you left in the

pockets? I forgot to look."

"Oh, no, no, no!" he lied. For how shall the young man speak to his beloved concerning pawn-tickets? Not until a minute ago had he remembered that the ticket for his grandfather's watch was in the right-hand pocket of those tarry garments.

He backed away from her, unable to

He backed away from her, unable to think of any reason to explain his conduct. He loved that watch. He would not have lost it for a wilderness of monkeys. Like so many respectably brought up young men, he knew nothing of the laws with which the pawnbroker is fenced around. To him it

seemed that the watch was lost for ever unless he could recover the ticket. But how recover it? How ask for it? Within an hour the story would be all over the village, and what would Joan think of him then? Was it possible to suppose that she, a queen among women, would ever look otherwise than with scorn on a pawner of watches?

Dunstall drifted away, glancing at folded garments, which purchasers carried uncovered under their arms, in search of grey flannel. He found the missing garments after some five minutes. An old and bearded man of sinister aspect stood with them under one of the windows, holding them up to the light and muttering his unpleasant thoughts aloud.

Dunstall approached him pleasantly and

warily.

"Aha! Just made a little purchase?"
he asked.

Jaspar Only rolled a heleful eve upon

Jasper Oaks rolled a baleful eye upon him.

"I hev," he said, and shook his clenched fist towards the roof. "Look at 'em! I trusted 'er when I bought 'em, 'er bein' passon's daughter. She charged me ninepence for 'em—me, an 'ard-workin' man who's never robbed nobody yet. Look at 'em! D'ye see that? Tar! Tar! Ef I wants tar on my trouses, I can put it on myself, but I don't. And she charged me ninepence!"

"Perhaps," said Dunstall, "the lady didn't know what they were like. The light, you know——"

"It's what I've always said," said Mr. Oaks. "Ef you want to be robbed, go to a passon. They're the biggest robbers of all. And me a poor 'ard-workin' man!"

"It's rather a shame," said Dunstall.

"Matter of fact, they used to belong to me.
I'll tell you what—I'll buy them back off
you. I'll give you two shillings for them,
then you'll have made a good profit."

"Not me, sir. I'm a pore man, but I can afford to lose the two shillun'. I'm goin' to keep them trouses. I'm a-goin' to show them to everybody I know, and show 'em how a pore 'ard-workin' man was swindled out of ninepence by them as thinks they're 'is betters."

"Now, don't you be silly!" Dunstall exclaimed heartily. "There's been a mistake, that's all. I'll give you five shillings for them."

"I wouldn't take five pound. So you're in with that lot, are you? Swindlin'

thieves! . It 'ud be worth five bob to you to 'ave it 'ushed up, I s'pose.'

Large beads of perspiration bedewed Dunstall's forehead. With difficulty he kept

his patience.
"Well, call it a sovereign, if you think

that," he said.

"Not for a 'undred sov'rins. I'll tell the story and show the trouses. I'll make 'em sorry they took advantage o' the trust of a pore workin' man."

"Two pounds, then."

"If they're worth two pound to you, they're worth more to me." His eyes suddenly gleamed craftily. He had not yet examined the pockets, and a sudden beautiful thought had occurred to him. "I'm not sellin', I tell you."

The instinct was strong in Dunstall to smite the old vagabond on a vital spot, seize the trousers, and flee from the place. At that moment, however, he heard a burst of innocent childish laughter behind him, and the voice of little Wilfred Lascelles called out-

"Don't you let him have them, Mr. Oaks. He's a nawful man. You bought 'em, and

they're yours."

"I'm going ter keep 'em, my lad, don't you fret," Mr. Oaks responded with spirit.

Dunstall shot the child a glance that was half baleful and half mystified. That Joan could have such a monstrous child for a brother was enough to make a fellow disbelieve in eugenics. He turned sadly away. What hope was there of doing business with Mr. Oaks in the presence of that appalling child?

"If they're worth two pound to 'im, they must be worth it to me," the old reprobate

murmured half to himself.

"Of course they are. You'll be a silly if you don't keep 'em, Mr. Oaks."

' I don't want none o' your advice, young man," the aged rustic rejoined sourly.

"All right, then. I won't tell you why he wants 'em back. That's all."
"Why does 'e?"

Wilfred drew a long breath. Something from a half-forgotten book of fairy tales had flashed across his mind.

"Because," he whispered, "they're a magic pair, and when you put 'em on you'll be invisible."

Jasper Oaks brooded over the boy for a moment and shook his head.

"So that's what they teach you at the Vicarage—sooperstition as well as robbery. Very good. I'll remember that, too."

V.

THERE are people in this world who are never so happy as when they consider themselves to have been wronged. Jasper Oaks was one of these. And to be wronged by the Vicarage was to him a very special piece of good fortune worthy of celebration. celebrated it in no half-hearted fashion.

From the corner of the large settle in "The Swan" he told his tale of wrong to every man who came in—told it, retold it, and enlarged upon it. Most of the frequenters of that rough old hostelry liked and respected the Vicar, and neither liked nor respected Jasper Oaks. But when sympathy was not immediately forthcoming, Oaks was willing to purchase it for the price of a pint mug.

He pointed out to all and sundry the state of terror to which the Vicarage people had been reduced at his threats of exposure. There was a stranger—a gentleman who seemed to belong to them—who had offered him as much as two pounds for the return of the trousers, saying that they had once

been his own.

The landlord, leaning over the counter with a presidential air, suggested that there might be something of value in the pockets.

"I thought o' that," Oaks replied frankly, "but there weren't. On'y a bit o' cardboard, with some writin' on it which I couldn't make out, me bein' no scholar. But it was worth nothin'. Eh, an' do you know what that little rat Wilfred

"I 'ate that child!" the landlord remarked

with feeling.

"'E told me they was a magic pair, and I'd be invisible when I got 'em on. Wot I says is, if Passon's children is brought up in sich ignorance and sooperstition, wot's the

good of this 'ere ejucation?"

As the evening advanced and the room filled, Jasper Oaks became more impassioned and slightly less coherent. his remarks on the rights of honest British working-men were well received, sundry fellow-workmen affected to disbelieve in his own particular grievance. Tar, they said, could be removed. If not, it lengthened the life of a garment. They inquired of Mr. Oaks if it were necessary, at his time of life, to appear as a fashion plate.

After much argument, table-smiting, and unparliamentary language, Mr. Jasper Oaks rose up. He would go, he said, to his humble cottage, and return with the trousers for which he had been made to pay ninepence,

and the company should judge for itself if he had been deeply wronged.

Jasper Oaks's cottage, where he dwelt in single bliss not entirely separated from dirt, was about half a mile distant. He made his way thither with some difficulty, being a little overcome by the fresh air acting upon his manly emotions. But he was a man of purpose, and donned his recent purchase, so that his friends might have the full benefit of the effect.

On leaving his cottage to return to "The Swan," one of those accidents befell which come suddenly to alter the whole current of a man's life. Hardly had he set foot in the road, when a missile of enormous size and weight struck him full in the chest, and he found himself lying gasping and struggling on the road, dimly aware that something had fallen close to him with a metallic clatter. The fallen boxer who is only just sufficiently conscious to hear the count is alone capable of appreciating Oaks's feelings.

As his breath returned to him, he was vaguely aware of a cyclist remounting his machine. He addressed the stranger in even stranger words, but the cyclist did not stop to parley.

"I didn't see you, you fool!" he growled,

as he made off.

It was the cyclist's favourite excuse, but, as Oaks picked himself up, the simple words seemed fraught with a new meaning. He was shaken, but unhurt. He could think clearly, or almost clearly. The words of little Wilfred Lascelles came back to him: "When you put 'em on, you'll be invisible."

Impossible, of course, but then was he not big enough to be seen? Strange that this should have happened to him the first moment he walked outside his gate in those garments. In case such things as miracles really did happen, it was worth while putting the matter to the test.

The opportunity arrived almost at once. Light, rapid footfalls were approaching, and in the starlight he recognised Miss Midger, the schoolmistress, on her way home from choir practice. If she shouldn't see him—

Miss Midger was by far the most strictly proper person in the village. Her views of life and mode of behaviour were borrowed from the days when the what-not flourished and the stuffed kingfisher stood haughtily upon the family portrait album. She was in the habit of referring to Mr. Oaks as "that Scandal."

Thus, when she drew near and Mr. Oaks suddenly flourished his arms and began to execute an eccentric pas seul, she was not surprised. Being a woman of courage, she did not falter in her stride, and she made use of the gift of which she was most proud—that of looking straight at a person without seeing him. She looked straight at Jasper Oaks and passed him as if he had been a heap of stones.

"Caw!" he gasped, and leaned heavily against his fence railings. It was true! It did not matter how impossible it seemed—

it was true.

Jasper Oaks allowed himself to slide to the ground. His head was singing. With the gift of invisibility, there was nothing which he might not do. Why, who was going to stop him from walking into the Bank of England and filling his pockets whenever he chose? Illimitable possibilities danced before his eyes.

We have all had our little ambitions, our boyish dreams, which we cling to even in age. Jasper Oaks had his. He had never particularly wanted to wed a princess, win the V.C., or lead England to victory in a Test Match, but he had always thought, if one only had the opportunity, and the courage to take it, what a house The Grange would be to burgle!

VI

It was just after midnight when Jasper Oaks, having made his few preliminary arrangements, proceeded to realise his old-time dream. Confident that detection was impossible in his case, he was careless in his methods. Any professional burglar who may be among my readers will shudder to learn that he broke one of the kitchen windows crudely with a brick.

Inside, he turned on such lights as came to hand, and looked about him. He was safe. There was really no need to be in a hurry to get to work. Pleasure may come before business when one is invisible. He took kindly to the idea of a little light refreshment before amusing himself among the valuables.

There was a fire still burning in the housekeeper's room, which smelt warm and inviting. Beside the clock hung a green baize board, to which many labelled keys were attached. He collected them all, took them with him to the door of the wine-cellar, and tried them one by one until the lock turned.

Two or three minutes later he was back

in the housekeeper's room with a cobwebencrusted bottle of port. Seating himself on a Windsor chair before the dying fire, he proceeded to revel in the prospects now opened up before him.

It was just at this time that Dunstall, in Jimmy Whitehead's room, was remarking:

"I swear I heard somebody knocking about downstairs."

The wine was old and full-flavoured and pleasing even to a palate slightly marred by fifty years of drinking beer. Oaks stretched forth his legs and drowsed until a sudden sound above brought him up with a jerk. His heart began to beat violently. He had been a fool to make so much noise. Somebody was coming down.

Conscience makes cowards of us all. There was little comfort in assuring himself that he could not be seen. Suppose the intruder should blunder against him or, worse, sit on him! Worse still, suppose invisibility should last only for a time! There were a hundred disquieting possibilities, all of which made it clear that the time had come to go. He rose up. So did the chair.

Oaks muttered below his breath, and, seizing it by the arms, strove to force it down. It merely tugged at his clothes, while, in a flash of thought, the awful truth became clear to him. The heat of the fire had melted the tar on his trousers just sufficiently to hold him to the chair. He went purple in the face with the effort, as he tugged and wrenched, but all to no purpose.

Footsteps were descending the stairs, and a sudden panic seized him. He went into the kitchen, half bent, at a waddling run, carrying the chair with him as a tortoise carries its shell. The kitchen window which he had opened remained open, but.——

"Reader," the Early Victorian novelist would say, "have you ever tried to climb through a window securely attached to a large chair?" Jasper Oaks essayed the feat. He tried his best and tried nobly. He got his legs and his head through, but the chair stuck and suspended him. There was pathos in the wail of despair that arose.

But his agony was short-lived. He was hauled back into the room by two young men in dressing-gowns, and left lying upon his side on the floor, while the two young men shrieked hysterically, punched each other, tottered about like maniacs, and held their sides in a state of merriment which threatened apoplexy. Watching them dully and without mirth, Jasper Oaks thought it was time to wake up, and pinched himself. But there was no waking from that dream.

* * * * * * * * * * said Jimmy Whitehead, in the course of retailing the story to the Vicar on the day following, "old Dunstall insisted on our letting the old villain off on condition that he got those tarred old grey flannel bags of his back. Of course, the poor old boy's a bit touched. He was babbling about being invisible."

The anti-climax is an odious thing, and one crying to the Athenæum for vengeance, but it can't be helped. There yet remains to be recorded a few words which passed between Joan Lascelles and Tony Dunstall on the day after they became engaged.

"I can't think why you have such an affection for old clothes which you can't wear, darling," she said. "Look at those flannel trousers, all over tar, which you made such a fuss about. Funny old thing!"

Dunstall smiled to himself and stroked the pocket which held his grandfather's watch.

"Dear old girl," he murmured, "I couldn't bear to part from anything I was wearing on the day I first met you. We might never have met at all if it hadn't been for that tar."

"Dear old tar!" said Joan.



THE WAGER

By RALPH COBINO

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM HATHERELL

A SUDDEN movement of Evelyn Lee's hand had touched and overturned a flower vase perched precariously at the edge of a bookstand. The noise of the breaking glass filled her ears, shutting off the sound of voices for a moment. She thought she had silenced them; but as she stooped for the flowers, the sound of the two voices came up to the balcony unchecked. She heard her own name, and pictured a running accompaniment of gesture to the sentences.

"They're quite happy, I believe. Of course, with such a background of romance, the Lees have an advantage over the rest of us. Most people meet their mates in humdrum fashion. The Lees can't have forgotten yet that they came together

under unusual circumstances."

"Unusual?" The other voice held the

word in suspension. "Do tell me."

Evelyn Lee rose from her chair, dragging it from the edge of the balcony. As the voices still persisted, she stepped from the balcony into the room beyond and closed the intervening door. It was a hot afternoon, and the closed door made the room airless. Also she knew that this afternoon her husband desired solitude. They had engaged a private sitting-room in the hotel so that he could have a place of refuge in which to write.

"I'm sorry to interrupt," she said, laughing, "but Mrs. Dunston is about to relate the story of a romantic courtship—ours. I came in lest I should overhear details not intended for my core."

details not intended for my ears."

"Why can't they let other people's affairs alone?" Lee wondered. "Women's tongues—" He shrugged his disapproval. In a moment he was immersed again in his work.

Evelyn drew a chair into a shaded corner of the room. Her hands were busy with a knitted scarf. Her eyes were intent upon her husband. She pictured his written fancies as visibly present in the room.

Whimsical thoughts called to her from every corner. Was, it not one of his exquisite fancies that had brought them together? She smiled to herself as her memory echoed Mrs. Dunston's phrase—"their unusual courtship." Evelyn savoured the romance of it again in retrospect. It was a glory that three years of marriage had not dimmed for her. She knew exactly the kind of phrases Mrs. Dunston would be using. She fell to mental mimicry of the gossip downstairs.

"You might call it 'The Romance of the Railway Platform,'" Mrs. Dunston was probably saying. "Just the commonplace kind of setting Gerald Lee takes to weave his magic around. He found himself in a place where nothing romantic was likely to show itself, and if you knew Lee, you would realise that just there he stumbled on a

fairy tale."

Here Mrs. Dunston would pause momentarily. Evelyn could see her drawing breath

for her next sentences.

"Lee was studying the faces of the waiting crowd—he has a gift for sensing character from a chance expression—and there amongst the crowd he saw one face—you know it well enough—the present Evelyn Lee. She sat opposite to us at lunch to-day."

Evelyn imagined Mrs. Dunston's sentences becoming involved. Then, with an effort, she would revert to her original strain.

"Lee didn't know who she was, but something about her must have called to his imagination. You know his style—charm, passion, good things jostling one another on every page. He gave the story the title 'The Woman on the Platform.' And then——"

Evelyn's knitting slipped from her knee and fell with a little rustle to the floor. She stooped for it. Raising her head again, she met her husband's eyes.

"A box of sweetmeats for your thoughts," he challenged. "You were smiling as though a little imp of mirth told you secrets."

"I was mentally finishing the conversation that is going on downstairs. I acted Mrs. Dunston to perfection. I must say she appreciates your merits. She spoke of charm

and a host of good things jostling one another on the printed page."
"Very kind of her." Lee pushed his work aside and got up from the table. "How hot it is! Need we hermetically seal the room because of those women's voices?" opened the glass door that led to the balcony. "Silence at last. They must have retired for a well-earned rest. Come out and breathe the air, Evelyn."

The balcony faced the hotel garden. Midsummer flowers were a riot of colour for the eye. Honey-seeking bees made music about the garden beds. Lawns sloped to the edge of a lake. Beyond the water tree-stocked hills shut the rest of the world from sight.

"What a heavenly spot this would be if there were no tourists!" Lee exclaimed. "You just catch the skirt of Peace when something jerks it from your fingers."

A waiter appeared in the doorway. "Someone asking for you on the telephone, sir."

Lee moved from the balcony with a shrug of annovance. Left alone, Evelyn went to her bookstand and took a magazine from under a heap of books. She was smiling to herself as she did this. It was the old number that held her husband's story "The Woman on the Platform." She turned the pages, found the story she looked for, and re-read it for the hundredth time. There was charm; there was an inevitable instinct for the right word. Lee had wielded his sentences as a magician his wand. background was perfect in construction. And against this background stood a vivid personality, moving, as the story progressed, to a rare height of attainment, an exalted showing of womanhood. All her succeeding actions had been divined by Lee in that one sight he had of her standing alone on the station platform.

Evelyn lifted her eyes from the printed page. Mentally she was visualising the romantic courtship Mrs. Dunston had spoken of. She saw herself chancing upon the magazine when it first appeared. She had read this story, picking up a detail here, another there-coincidences of suggested time and place of departure, her dress, the colouring of her hair and eyes, a trick of gesture. It might have been any one of a hundred women, and, by a miracle,

it had been herself. For afterwards she had made Lee's acquaintance in the house of a friend. The sudden, almost startled, lifting of his eyes to hers as they were introduced had been revelation. It had hardly needed Lee's confession later, when friendship claimed them—and then love.

Evelyn moved to the edge of the balcony. Her eves went to the tree-stocked hills. They were like sentinels guarding the valley from invasion-barricades, armoured citadels, making security for the people below. She heard Lee's returning footsteps, and, without turning her head, she pointed to the hills.

"Don't you feel that they defend, protect?"

"From what?" He came to her side.

"Who is the enemy?"

"I suppose comradeship with you has bred fancies in my own head. The hills have become understanding friends, defenders. They form a circle in which we

move securely."

There was a sudden keen scrutiny in his eyes, and then abruptly she saw his expression alter. He leant from the edge of the balcony—listening. Somewhere below a man's voice could be heard talking, laughing. It was a distinctive voice; something in its note set it apart from the others. The booming laugh set the corners of Evelyn's mouth twitching.

"What an infectious laugh! And the

voice—the man ought to sing well."

"He doesn't." Lee shook his head. "He has no ear for time and rhythm."

"Then you know him?" She glanced

up with a flash of surprise.

"Hubert Barnes, an old school friend. He must have just arrived from some odd corner of the earth. He drops down on one like an unexpected meteorite from the sky. I knew it was Barnes the moment I heard his laugh." Lee turned from the balcony. "I'll run down and see him for a minute."

Over her shoulder Evelyn called: "Gerald, wouldn't you like to ask your friend to share our table at dinner?

Lee hesitated. "I don't think he's your

sort, but I'll ask him, if you like."

Evelyn reproached her imagination for the quick flight it took. Gerald was not pleased to see Hubert Barnes at the hotel. There was even something of moment behind his annoyance, as if through a screen of summer rain you caught a glimpse of distant mountains, dark and brooding.



"He swung round, facing her. 'Evelyn, there aren't words to express my regret for the things Barnes said to you to-night.' 'But they were truth?' 'Yes,' he said."

When the sound of the laughing voice had come up to the balcony, Lee had retreated.

It was that exactly. It was a quick withdrawing into some inner citadel of his



personality. She had divined it as inevitably as she realised his physical presence.

Her feet pushed against something, and there was the sound of crackling paper. "The Woman on the Platform"—the words stared at her from the ground. She stooped for the magazine and pushed it back into the bookstand.

She could hear that booming voice under-

neath the balcony.

"Why, it's Lee! I didn't know you were here, or I would have sent you word.

the next morning."

Evelyn stepped from the balcony into the room beyond. It was easy to feel an eavesdropper on that balcony. Voices rose

up to it, winged things.

At dinner Evelyn felt like one who dines in the presence of a hurricane. Speaking of travel, Barnes's voice swept her from one end of the earth to the other. He had wit and a sense of words. His sentences showed Evelyn odd corners of the world as clearly as pictures would have done. She saw him

as a big, good-tempered man, with restlessness like a tireless flame at the core of him. Mountains, the desert, tracts of primeval forest—he spoke of little else. Dinner was nearly over before Evelyn realised that any deviation from these themes was watched and guarded against by her husband.

She dropped a sentence into the pause that fell at last. "My husband tells me

you and he are old friends."

"We were at school together," Barnes told her. His laugh rang out. "Don't expect me to say he was the cleverest boy there. He only excelled in imagination. Mathematics tripped him, but he could keep us awake half the night spinning yarns."

"You must be yarn-spinner to-night," Lee interjected. "We stay-at-homes like

to sit at the feet of wanderers."

Barnes waved this aside and turned to

Evelyn

"He was always able to make bricks out of straw. We'd egg him on to tell tales, with any humdrum old thing in the dormitory as a starting-point. We'd fling it down as a wager. Whatever we chose, he built a tale round it. Why, I remember the very last time I saw him I tried the old schoolboy trick." He turned to Lee. "Did you ever write that tale? I've been out of the way of magazines and books these last years."

A waiter handed Barnes a serving dish. There was a little interval of silence—of seconds only—yet Evelyn had a curious sense of time, an illimitable stretch of it.

"I told him to look at the crowd on the platform and single out as hero or heroine the person who struck him as being the most utterly commonplace—someone whose appearance gave the lie to everything save mere matter-of-fact existence. But the train came in the next minute. I never thought of it again. It would be like him to respond to my whip, though."

Once again Evelyn had that curious illusion of time. A moment passed like an eternity. Yet she was the first to speak.
"He did respond." She bent across the

"He did respond." She bent across the table. "The story was quite popular. Personally I have always thought it one of his best. He gave it the title 'The Woman on the Platform.'"

"Good!" Barnes's laugh encircled their table. "What a wizard the fellow is! Give him copper, and he makes gold of

it!"

Their table was set near a window, and Evelyn, lifting her eyes, saw the hills, immovable guardians, set about the valley. Armoured citadels—she longed to escape to them.

"Have you kept a copy of the magazine?"
Barnes was saying. "I should like to see it."

Evelyn was hardly listening now to their voices—Barnes's interrogations, Gerald's ${
m She}$ realised vaguely that responses. Gerald had shifted their talk back to big game and perilous climbing. The two men seemed as remote as the countries they spoke of. She was alone in a place of her own, with certain sentences illumined for her vision. . . . " He was always able to make bricks out of straw". . . "On the station platform I told him to single out the person who seemed the most commonplace—someone who gave the lie to everything save mere matter-of-fact existence . . . And then: "What a wizard the fellow is! Give him copper, and he makes gold of it."

She looked at her husband across the width of the table. Barnes's voice held the surface of his attention. She knew that under that surface wonder would hold the mastery. He would try to visualise the thoughts of one who had thought herself gold and not copper—winged and not crippled. He would wonder, and he would pity. That last brought her suddenly to her feet.

"I'll leave you to have your coffee—and then your smoke."

Back on the balcony, she looked with surprise at its familiarity. It was as if it had remained unchanged through an earthquake. The hills! She lifted her eyes to them. Armoured citadels! She picked up the phrase, studied it, realised suddenly that in their armoury she had been a prisoner. They had shut her away from truth, from a clear vision.

Dusk was coming stealthily upon the valley. It borrowed shadows from the darkening sky and draped the hills with them. Night whispered slumber-songs to the birds, making them mute. It robbed the flower-beds of colour, and ran presently from end to end of the valley, a tireless spinner, weaving a cloak of darkness.

Evelyn watched from the balcony. Night was a pageant, spread for her diversion. She let the wonder of its coming hold her. It was a narcotic dulling the ache

of realisation.

Someone moved about in the room behind,

stumbling in the darkness. Then the flare of a match, and Gerald's voice—

"Are you there, Evelyn?"

He came to the end of the balcony where she stood.

"Are you too tired to come out with me for a little while? There's something I want

to show you."

A new note in his voice came as a challenge. Her imagery of the hills as armoured citadels was carried on, intensified. Gerald's voice was a clarion call to the citadel. And then suddenly she laughed. Imagery was not for her. She was matter-of-fact, commonplace.

He looked at her in surprise.

"I'm all right," she told him. "You—you wouldn't understand why I laughed." She stooped for a wrap that had fallen to the floor. "Now I am ready. Take me wherever you want to."

He led the way in silence down the balcony steps and out into the night. The moon had battled with darkness and vanquished it. The valley spread before them serene and beautiful.

Evelyn touched her husband's arm and

pointed to the hills.

"I was wrong. They were not citadels.

They were prisons shutting me in."

He came to a pause. She felt his scrutiny, and turned her head, meeting it; but, save for one quick exclamation, he was silent. He laid his hand on her arm again, guiding her to the path he sought, and presently she realised that he was taking her towards the hills. They followed a narrow track that mounted, leaving the valley behind. Evelyn could not have told how long they had been walking when Lee touched her on the shoulder.

"Follow me for a few steps and then

The track swerved suddenly, and Evelyn gave a quick exclamation. The path had followed a cutting between the hills, and for the first time since she had been at the hotel she looked beyond the barriers to the further country. The moon and crowding stars hung like lighted lamps in the roof of the world. Beneath their shining the open country stretched for miles. Beyond lay the silver streak of the sea. After the imprisonment of the valley behind them, it was like sudden illimitable freedom.

"We can talk here," Lee exclaimed.
"Down there——" He shrugged and took

a further step along the path.

She came to his side. With a quick

movement she held out her hands as if in appeal.

"Give me truth," she said.

"That's why I brought you here." He pointed to the far-away silver of the sea. "Something about this place forces one to the truth." He swung round, facing her. "Evelyn, there aren't words to express my regret for the things Barnes said to you to-night."

" But they were truth ?"

"Yes," he said.

The night had many voices—wind-stirred leaves in the trees, running water, the occasional whir of a bat's wings. All these things seemed mimicry of Barnes's voice... "The most commonplace... one who

"The most commonplace... one who gave the lie to everything save mere matter-of-fact existence..." Evelyn felt the sudden sting of her cheeks as if someone had struck them.

"I seemed that to you as I stood there on the platform?"

"Yes," he echoed.

The pain in his voice brought her hand again to his arm. It slid presently to his hand and rested there.

"Don't worry, Gerald. I understand that it hurts you as much as it hurts me."

"More," he exclaimed—"a thousand times more!"

It seemed to Evelyn that a long interval of time passed before Gerald spoke again, yet it was only a few seconds. She had measured it by the beating of her heart.

"I hadn't seen or heard from Barnes since that day on the station platform four years ago. When I heard his voice to-day, I had a premonition that he was going to lift the curtain."

Evelyn had a swift vision of that lifted curtain. On the other side of it she saw herself clearly. The phrases Barnes had used were like footlights set before a stage. She was dazzled by their revealing light.

"The coward in me would have left the curtain down. If ever in the years we have had together I tried to lift it, my courage failed me. You had a certain estimate of me and of my powers of divination. The raised curtain would show me deficient in the very realm in which I dared to claim mastery."

She looked at him, not understanding, groping after his meaning.

His voice came again.

"The lifted curtain showed me to you as copper, and I had dared to masquerade as gold. I let you think I had divined the

exquisite personality that is you at a glance. But I was blind. I thought you—what Barnes's sentences implied. I set to work to build a fairy tale, a fantasy. I—I was laughing up my sleeve as I wrote. You seemed to me at a glance as little like my imaginary heroine as tinsel is like gold. And then afterwards chance brought us together, and I got to know you, the beautiful soul of you. Evelyn, why aren't there words that scourge enough? I want to feel them like whips across my shoulders."

Silence wrapped her about like a mantle. Her whole being was concentrated on the sense of hearing. . . "I let you think I had divined the exquisite personality that is you at a glance . . ." Night took the words, repeating them in every rustle of her sable skirts. She traced them in the sky with the

vivid letters of the stars.

"Now you have had the truth, does it put me too far off for your forgiveness, Evelyn?"

Truth! The word seemed inherent in the very air they were breathing. From their feet to the distant line of the horizon there was room for nothing else. The vault of the sky was like the roof of a vast temple of truth.

"Truth means freedom," Evelyn said.
"Even when it hurts, it still spells freedom."

He scourged himself again with Barnes's remembered phrases. "That was my first interpretation of the woman who afterwards interpreted Heaven for me."

She lifted her head to the night breeze, glorying in it. Gerald was giving her his truth, and it was lifting her near to a place

of ecstasy.

"When I wrote that story," he told her, "I had never met a woman who meant anything to me. They came and went like pictures on a screen. When I wrote of women, they were not real; they were only creatures of my fancy. I draped my imagination on them as a tailor drapes his

models. When I picked you out from the crowd on the station platform, you were that only—a mere lay figure." Suddenly he was vehement. "To me the years we have spent together have been marred by that secret. Take my truth, Evelyn—and my shame."

Her eyes were fixed on the far-away gleam of the sea. Stillness and calm were like veritable presences in the night. She could have fancied their healing touch about her body. Sentences that had pricked and hurt seemed suddenly of no account.

"The outer shell"—Gerald's voice broke the silence—"it's the part that doesn't matter, Evelyn. Only the beautiful soul of you matters."

She turned her head towards the valley behind them. She had escaped from those narrow boundaries. There could have been no permanent happiness without truth.

She heard the rustle of paper, and saw Gerald take something from his pocket. He

held it towards her.

"That old magazine. Shall we burn it? I could never tell you how I have hated the

sight of it in your hands."

He set a match to the pages, and ribbons of flame shot up into the night. They stood together in the circle of illumination, watching the burning paper. Now and then sentences showed clearly, then shrivelled and blackened. "The Woman on the Platform"! The words stared up at them from the ground, vivid against the background of night. Presently flames captured and obliterated them.

"You are infinitely more than 'The Woman on the Platform," Lee said then.

"You are the woman of my heart."

Evelyn was conscious of a rare mood of exaltation. She had stumbled through shadows to find sunlight. She had lost tinsel and found gold.





EDWARD RAY'S OVERLAPPING GRIP.

GOLFING IDEAS AT RANDOM

By EDWARD RAY

Photographs by Sport & General

UITE accustomed have I become to all the funny remarks concerning my golfing unorthodoxy—quite accustomed to remarks to the effect that I require a double fairway (and my answer to this is that I am on the green in two strokes just as often as my brother-professionals). And just as much have I become accustomed to the quips of a certain famous cartoonist who recently "portrayed" me with the object of showing the requirement of a jazz band whilst I am playing golf. Now, I quite admit that in many respects I defy all the canons of golf, but, to take the matter logically, if we had in our midst a

man who did everything as it ought to be done, and never at any time did anything embodying the slightest semblance of a golfing error, then that man would annex everything of importance in golf, and the Royal and Ancient game would sink into oblivion as a competitive affair. In short, I claim that we have yet to see the golfer who is devoid of imperfections. Ergo, a few hints on golf from me may be taken seriously or they may not, and here let me say that I am more particularly addressing the handicap sixteen man, one of whose ambitions is to get down to about handicap four, for this is the man who goes to make

up what we know as the golfing public. Over and above this, the average golfer is the man who plays on a course Perhaps, owing to the enthusiasm of a well-known journalistic concern, more attention is being given to putting just at



EDWARD RAY'S STANCE.

adjacent to a city, and not the man who spends three months in each year on one of our British seaside courses, and another three, say, in the South of France.

present than is allotted to any other branch of golf, and here let me observe that the man who can "putt or pitch a golf ball into the hole on each of eighteen putting

greens from six yards and one and a half yards" is well entitled to five hundred pounds—and a bit more.

I doubt not that there has been more

the tricks of fortune on the putting green, for it must be remembered that golf putting is not like chess, in which it was proved recently that two players bent on the world's



EDWARD RAY DRIVING.

contention, and more ink wasted, over the vexed question of putting than over any other department of the game of golf. Moreover, I do not believe there is a golfer breathing who will succeed in eradicating championship had reached a stage approximating to perfection.

Straightway I will characterise as utterly impracticable the oft-advanced theory that the putter should "dangle" to and fro from

the wrists, and that the club-head should then take a straight line back; and one thing I would here point out is that the shaft of the putter does not stand at right angles to the head of the putter.

The hands should be much nearer to the player than to a point directly over the ball. Therefore, if the hands are to be kept in a proper position, the club cannot be made to move in a straight line, always assuming that the hands are not moved with the head of the putter, and that the club-head is not being forced away before or after striking the ball. Endeavour to move the club-head in a straight line, and it is odds on your ball going to the left of the target which you intended it to find.

The face of the putter should be "clean on" the ball at the moment of impact, and there should be a tendency to turn in the follow through.

Another weakness which I have observed is that of using an iron or a mashie up to the hole in such a manner as to get the blade of the club well under the ball, the net effect being a stab. Believe me, that in doing this the golfer reduces to a minimum the opportunity of studying length or direction.

So much for what must be avoided, and now for the other side of the picture. A swaying of the body almost inevitably provokes a push out, and, from first to last, the golfer in putting should keep in mind and employ his wrists.

An essential point is to see that the face of the club is at right angles to the hole, and in following through let the left hand come well through, for, if it is not done, the swing is checked unhealthily, a stab here being the result.

Take a good grasp of the club in putting, and, after once having surveyed the hole and the peculiarities of the ground surrounding it, do not again take your eye off the ball until it has been well sent on its errand. Indeed, you cannot gaze too long at the spot that the ball occupied, and, on the other hand, no amount of ferocious gazing will affect the run of the ball in even the most minute way.

I have never ceased to advocate the hitting of the ball with the middle of the face of the putter, and the theory that it is a good plan to make a fine chalk line on the face of the putter, and let the club come into contact with the ball exactly at the point, I characterise as so much nonsense, for if the player has his eye fixed on the ball, how can he judge to a small fraction which part of the putter strikes the ball, granted that the player must hit the ball correctly? But practice—sheer hard practice—will in time tell him when he is hitting the ball correctly or when he is hitting it untruly.



WHICH DO YOU PITY?

DOUGLAS NEWTON

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

THE big, good-looking boy—what was his name? Robbic are in other-checked obviously when he saw that the girl Berta had a partner. Prevost, who was that partner, watched him shrewdly. This, he felt, was a comedy and, maybe, something more.

Berta saw the boy. There was no doubt of that. She saw him and she looked through She went on doing something entirely unnecessary to her gloves-but perhaps not entirely unnecessary; her action did show off her hands and wrists, small and neat hands and wrists, whose beauty Prevost could not overlook.

The boy stood quite still for a moment. His attractive face stiffened and his lips tightened—only the pain in his eyes gave him away. Then as quietly he turned and walked off. There was something rather fine in the young dignity of the boy as he Prevost felt both ashamed and admiring.

Berta looked up at the traveller with that bright glance of hers that had all the quick beauty of a lovely bird. And her innocence

—that was astonishing.

"This is the supper number, Cave Man?" she asked, with a delicious smile. "Shall we cut out the dance and go in before the mob arrives?"

"A clever idea," he agreed. "But are you sure you weren't engaged for this

dance, Miss Marianhill?"

"I'm quite sure I'm engaged for it now," she pouted up at him. "A big, brown Cave Man from the uttermost wilds wrested it from me by force."

"I didn't by chance wrest it from someone else?" he asked. He was thinking that her version of his polite request was fanciful - as fanciful as the nickname she had given him. "I didn't wrest it from that boy Bobbie, for instance?"

His eyes, looking curiously keen and blue in his tropics-tanned face, studied her. Her exquisite face showed not a tremor of emotion.

"Bobbie is entirely immaterial," she laughed, and she took his arm with a delightful and playful tug in the direction of the supper-room. "Bobbie does not matter at all. But my appetite doesit's enormous. Cave Man, go hunting with a knobbly club for your woman.'

A light remark, a frivolous remark, but into that last sentence didn't she put just a shade of—something? though he was by travel and hard work and many encounters, Prevost felt there was something in it that touched even his steady nerve to a responsive thrill—yes, even though there was every reason why he should keep a level head.

They found—no, she found—a corner of definite isolation. He, in his calm, unhurried way, forced himself to the front of the crowd that had already gathered round the buffet, and came back in an astonishingly short

time with food and drink.

The talk presently came round to the boy Bobbie again. Who managed that? Prevost rather thought she did, but so cleverly the idea seemed to come from him. He found himself saying—

"I thought you were rather pally with Bobbie What's-his-name. I mean, in the week I have known you he seems to have

been about a lot.'

"He's a nice boy, Bobbie," she said in a tone that was motherly, and he knew was meant to sound motherly. "I'm very fond of Bobbie, I assure you. We're quite good friends."

"He seems a very decent fellow," admitted Prevost. "Not very old?"

"An enfant," she burst out brightly, and he knew he had given her the opportunity she wanted—to explain herself. "An absolute infant. Of course I'm centuries older than he is." Prevost expressed the agnosticism she expected. She pressed his arm softly, and went on with gaiety: "Well, really, he is younger. And, you know, he acts rather youthfully. He's so serious. Takes—takes ordinary, small things seriously. He expects too much. He doesn't know the line where playing ends. He is a nice boy, but he is a boy, and he sometimes palls on one."

She took the sting out of her remarks

with a swift and glowing smile.

"No, I shouldn't say all that. Please forget it. He really is a dear boy—only really he does expect a little too much from friendship sometimes. I suppose he can't help it. He lacks experience—a little—experience of the world, that makes a man big, I think. Now let us put that behind. Tell me of all the things you have seen and known in your immense travels."

She laid her hand for a moment on his arm, softly, with a subtle combination of interrogation and caress. He saw that the engagement ring she had been wearing during the week he had known her was no longer on her finger. He knew that, among other things, that delightful pressure on his arm was to call his attention to its absence.

"I'm not a talker," he said, and he looked at her with a quiet smile that hid from her the swift thoughts that were racing behind his broad, brown forehead. "I'm a very brute of a talker, but I think you are the sister to the Sirens. You make me want to talk to you."

She threw back her head so that he could catch the soft and splendid beauty of her

warm throat.

"Now the Cave Man is flattering," she

rippled. "And it's rather nice."

Prevost talked to her of a colourful journey he had made into the spruce-veiled valleys of the Kettle Valley country. He had gone there before the railway, blazing a way into lonely mountain pockets after silver.

And, as he talked, his mind had gone back two months to a scene in the steamy forests of Brazil. It had occurred three nights before he had left Steven Ingham.

He had been with Steven Ingham three

years, sharing the quite wonderful work he had been doing. They were supposed to be planters up there on the rot-scented and misty waters of the Amazon. Their particular job was to grow rubber, and to cup it and send it to the world's markets, so that those at home should be rich in dividends. Certainly they did that job well, but, under the will of Steven Ingham, they did very much more.

They had worked for something more than dividends. They had done man's work—work that the real white man finds it imperative to do. They had not merely cleaned up and planted and made profitable a giant rubber estate. They had cleaned up, planted, and made profitable the rule of decency and straight-dealing in a province as big as a small nation.

When Prevost had travelled by steamer and then by *igarite* up the leaf-stained waters of a side-stream that slipped darkly and dankly under the canopy of *sipos* between the aisles of reticent and mighty trees, he had found Ingham already deep

The estate was already paying in cash. Ingham was working hard to make the surrounding country pay in decency and

in his work at San Malachi.

 ${f content ment.}$

It had not been a place with a good name. When Ingham had come to it, the mameluce and the pure-bred Tupi Indian spat hate at the mere thought of the white man. Abominations had happened and were happening in that vast tract of enigmatic forest. The greedy exploiter had moved among the villages on the river banks, and at the end of the hunter tracks that threaded the limitless forest, and where the exploiter had gone, there had been double-dealing, robbery, and the foul evil of weak men murdered by the strong.

Yes, the missioners of the great god Mammon had shown themselves at their vilest in the San Malachi tract, and the name of the white man was a byword, and the shadow of the white man was shunned; and sometimes the body of a white man lay rotting in the half-night of the bush, the victim of the curari-smeared arrow that had sped from a blow-pipe through a savage impulse to balance wrongs.

Ingham came to San Malachi to find himself an outcast. He could only work his estate by means of West Indian negroes shipped the long journey up-stream. The half-castes (mamelucos) would not work for him. The natives would not even come near

him. He had set himself the task of altering all this. It was not easy, but he was a real white man—the white man that is white all through. He took up the task as such white men will.

He had altered things. He had killed dead the system that is half slavery, on which many such estates are run. He had, that is, put his foot down in the matter of accounts at stores—those accounts which, with seeming ingenuousness, allowed workers to draw heavily in goods against their future pay, and which are so manipulated that the hands are always in arrear of payment, and, according to the law, always forced to work until that arrear is wiped out.

Not a simple matter to smash that system. The negro hands whom he was trying to help were themselves against him. They liked the system; to interfere with this thing that made them slaves was interfering with their rights. Oh, Ingham had a bitter fight to fight! But he fought it, and won.

And he fought many others. He fought official corruption in the district. He brought in justice for everybody, not for the man with the most milreis. He brought straight dealing. The word of the white man became the thing it always should be—a bond. He brought comfort, and seemly standards of living, and means to work the land and obtain rewards from it. He brought in doctors—he made the district sweet and clean and fit for human beings to live in.

He had started this work directly he had arrived in the district, and when Prevost came he helped him. Prevost could not help putting his back into it. Ingham was a big man, a man with a large, clean soul. He was your true great man—the man with a great spirit who accomplished great things.

On the night Prevost was thinking of they had sat behind the mosquito netting of the house and looked through the clearing in the bush to where the gold-coloured stream swept swiftly and secretly onward, and they had talked of these things. And in the midst of this talk, and of talk about Prevost's return home, Ingham had sprung his surprise on his friend. He had said he was going home, too.

was going home, too.
"On leave?" Prevost had said. "Well,

you do need a holiday, old chap."

"For good," Ingham had said in his quiet way, lying back serenely in the long cane chair, puffing serenely at his long cigar, as though he hadn't dropped a bomb bang in the middle of the conversation. Prevost, after a moment's staring, gasped—

"But you can't do it, Steven."

"In four months' time I go home, too," Ingham had said, as though he was continuing his first statement. Prevost could only gasp again—

"You can't do it, Steven."

"Eh?" the other had retorted, looking round with a sort of innocent amazement on his lean, strong face. "Eh? Can't do it? What on earth possesses you?"

"You can't leave this." Prevost indicated the whole district of San Malachi with the

sweep of his hand.

"Why not? You're not showing an immense reluctance at going yourself."

"But you are different."

"I'm human, as human as you are, human and civilised, and I have just your hankering for human and civilised places. Good Heavens, what have I done to make you imagine otherwise? I want to go home, too—and I'm going home in four months."

"But for good?"

"You're going for good."

"Don't drag me in so much, Steven. It forces me to say again you're different. I'm only the small pebble in San Malachi—you are everything...."

Before Prevost had finished speaking, Ingham had burst out with the nearest approach to pettishness he had ever shown.

Don't keep on saying I'm different. It's absurd of you. I'm a white man, a servant of a company. I've been forced to work in this fever-ridden, barbaric place by the terms of my contract. When the term of my contract is up, I go home like any other white man. I'm just a white man doing what white men do, accepting banishment from home and friends and—and civilisation, in order to earn money. I've made that money, I've done my work, I go home. It's merely human and logical."

He spoke, as Prevost saw, with a touch of irritation, as though he were arguing against some sort of inner voice, some fundamental instinct that was reproaching him for leaving this place where he had accomplished so much that was worth while. Prevost understood what was going on inside him, and felt for him. He said gently—

"All right, old son. You're right, no doubt. I wasn't meddling, only I was rather startled that you should be leaving for good."

"Managers must leave in time," said

Ingham, still on his defence.

"I wasn't thinking so much of the estate," said Prevost. "I was thinking of the district—what you've been able to do for all these poor blighters. It'll be a bit of a break for them."

That made Ingham silent—it would be a bit of a break for him, too. After that silence he said, more in hope than in his

own support-

"Even there—I don't suppose I'm indispensable. Others can carry on the policy. If anything had happened to me, for example, my place would have been filled. I've laid down the lines; they'll be easy to follow."

They sat quietly smoking. Both of them were thinking of the "lines" that had been laid down—how different they were to the "lines" usual with the ordinary estate manager, how Ingham, like some great Empire-builder, had been—was—solely responsible for the happiness and well-being of all that huge district, of all the villages, and all the thousands of trustful natives who lived in them. Would it be easy to follow the "lines"?

Would the Company find another spaciousminded, big-hearted, great-spirited man fit

to take Ingham's place?

Both saw this, for Prevost was a worthy lieutenant of so worthy a leader, and both saw how the change might be an ugly one. That great district in wrong, or even in indifferent, hands might easily degenerate; misery, poverty, quarrels, even the old beastliness, might return to it.

Prevost said presently: "Know who your

successor is?

"I fancy they'll give the job to some other manager—temporarily. I believe that's the idea."

"Know who he is?"

"Petresen from the Tapajos Estate."

"Oh, that fellow," said Prevost, after looking at the butt of his cigar before answering. And there was nothing for it but that both should remain silent. Ingham broke it. He was still defending himself against his inner advocate.

"He's a good fellow enough. The old style, of course—a dividend extractor, whatever happens to the hands and the natives. But he's not really a bad sort. He may see my point of view. And then he won't be here for more than six months—nine months

at the most."

"Oh! And who follows him?"

"Nobody has been named. You see-Well, the Company doesn't yet appreciate the fact that my resignation is final. They want me to renew."

Prevost sat upright with something like satisfaction.

"They're wise!" he cried. "Perhaps you will."

" No," said Ingham.

"Oh, you don't know yet. After you've had your holiday you'll see things in a better light. You'll see that this is the only work for you to do, and, what is more, you're the only man to do it."

"No," said Ingham.

"Wait until you get out of this place to where you can think clearly. Of course, the Company is wise. You won't be able to resist. Why, San Malachi is you. It depends on you, it was built up by you, its future well-being absolutely hangs on you. You won't be able to get away from it. You're stale at the present moment, through being too long in this place. When you get into a clear atmosphere, you'll see where your duty calls."

"You seem pretty certain?"

"I am certain. I go back home to marry,"

said Ingham very softly.

Prevost was struck dumb. He felt mean and small. He felt that he had been blundering. Only after a minute could he say—

"I'm awfully sorry, old man. Why didn't you prevent me talking like an ass? I hadn't the slightest idea I was shoving my nose into personal matters."

"All right—I understand thoroughly, old chap. It was my fault for remaining mum. Only, our sort don't talk much about these

things, do we?"

Prevost nodded. Ingham's lean face had a light in it as he turned to his friend. Like all reticent men, he was a little inclined to talk of his love affair now that he had brought it up. Perhaps that inner voice he was endeavouring to quell with argument also caused him to speak, for he said simply—

"I became engaged to her before I left home. I loved her, of course, but I could not bind her. She herself insisted on the engagement. She said that she would wait five years for me, and more, if necessary—women are wonderful in their patience and loyalty. And she has waited. I hear from her regularly. So you see the end of my contract is the end of our waiting. I'm selfish. It'll be greater happiness than I deserve "—the light in his steady eyes showed how great that happiness was—"and I'm going to spend the rest of my life

making up for the years she's remained true—remained firm in her belief in me and my success."

He was quiet for a moment. Then he

continued-

"She fills me with awe, Prevost. She has individuality, character, beauty. She loves happiness and gaiety, and yet she binds herself to me. She is staunch and true. She gives with such splendid generosity. There is nothing mean or trivial about her. A superb character, Prevost, for whom it is fit that I give up even such work as I am able to do here, and with her companionship I don't doubt that I shall be able to find something worthy to do in the civilised world. These noble women, they bring all that is good out of a man."

And before, just before Prevost left San Malachi in the little gasolene launch that had taken the place of the old *igarate*, Ingham

had said to him-

"Will you go to her and tell her that you are a friend of mine, and have worked with me? Tell her that I am coming home. I have written to her, of course, and she knows, but she will like to hear it from you, and to talk over things. And I want you to know her."

He had given Prevost this wonderwoman's name and address, and had showed him a beautiful girl's head, which, he said,

was her latest photo.

The name he had written down was Berta Marianhill. The photo was the photo of the girl who had laid her ringless hand so alluringly on Prevost's arm in the supper-

room of the Charity Dance.

And, as he sat talking to the girl Berta in the supper-room, Prevost thought of all these things—all that Ingham was leaving for the sake of this girl, what it would mean to the people of San Malachi when Ingham left them for the sake of this girl. And he thought, too, even as he went on speaking of his early pioneer days in the Kettle Valley, of the girl herself.

He had spent two or three days at home, finding it, as many overseas men do, irksome and a little narrow and crabbing after the splendid freedom of primitive places. Then

he had called on the girl.

He had called on her in her bright, rather feverish home. He had said he was a friend of Steven Ingham, had met him on the Amazon. He might have said more, but she had swept him away with a vivid spate of talk.

"Steven Ingham!" she had rippled,

smiling on him with her wide and radiant eyes. "Oh, but a dear fellow! He used to be a great friend of ours, Poppa and Momma, and me, too, before his rather ghoulish passion for black men and dark places led him off to the Amazon. I hear from him occasionally even yet. He's got frightfully solemnish, I must say. Do the wilds affect a man like that? But no, you're not a bit like that—you look rather—wicked." The exquisite head, the delicate and innocent face, were tipped ravishingly, and she gave him all the regard of her alluring and glorious eyes.

Prevost, rather bewildered, felt will-less and incapable of direction before her. And there was an atmosphere about the house that threw him off his balance. There were so many handsome and determined youths, so many plain young women who obviously could not be the reason for the youths being

there.

"Come and speak to Momma," said Berta, touching his sleeve with a moving little gesture. "Momma, Momma, this is Mr. Prevost. He met Steven Ingham out in the wilds."

Prevost shook hands with Momma, and Poppa, who was near, while Berta, with a bright glance, went off to a group of youths of whom the boy Bobbie had been the most possessive, and Momma had said—

"Steven Ingham, now? You know him—that would be the one who went to Malay?"

"No," prompted Poppa wearily, "Mac-Elligot was the one who went to Malay. Ingham went to the Amazon." He looked at Prevost and smiled apologetically and weakly. It was from him Berta got her beauty. There was a fineness about him—a fineness that had surrendered to softness.

Berta was back at his side very quickly, and she was charming. She had that vivid and stimulating beauty that swept the will away, and a sort of directness—a pleasantness, a common-sense, an air of warmth and affection, that was altogether winning. She obviously found something attractive in the lean, narrow good looks of Prevost, and she found the details of his life fascinating.

"So you have come back from the wilds? You're going to settle down like a human being? You've done your work, made your

pile, as they say?"

"Yes, I've made the sort of pile I wanted to make. I've come home to do things with it. There's work here that can be done at a profit."

"How refreshing!" she said a little



"She swung round. 'Steven, this is my fiancée, Berta Marianhill. Berta, this

wistfully. "It's so good to find a man who has really made his money, a man who has done it, not talked about doing it."

Prevost had not understood her very well then. She was astonishingly beautiful, gracious, and affectionate, but he had not truly come in contact with the soul inside that wonderful casket.

And, looking back, he saw that it was from that time that he began to understand her. She began to show herself to him. They began to be great friends, to see much



is my old friend Steven Ingham. Oh, but you know each other, don't you?""

of each other, to go about much She began to exhibit the charm, the friendliness, the affection, the woman's desire to cling to strength. Yes, he began to know her.

He began, through this new acuteness, to notice that the boy Bobbie was always

hanging round her, or, rather, in the first days of his friendship he was always with her. He felt that that youth was extraordinarily possessive. He wondered whether the engagement ring on Berta's finger was his, or whether—and he experienced a twinge—it dated back to a more distant episode in her life. Nothing was said, but he asked himself what was the relationship between the two.

Then the boy Bobbie began to drift into the background. Berta was more and more with himself. He began to monopolise her until, at this dance, in the supper-room of this dance, Bobbie had been vanquished. The ring, to whomsoever it belonged, had vanished, and he felt that Berta herself had thrown all aside in favour of him.

They sat talking of the Kettle Valley of British Columbia, and the intimacy between them strengthened. Prevost felt that the thing he had hoped for, the mastery, had come to him, and experienced both shame and gladness. After supper he took her out and danced with her, and danced with her again, and he knew that Berta had made up her mind, and that now it was only a question of himself.

Shame and elation again swelled within him, and with it a doubt. It was this doubt that led him to seek out the boy Bobbie and, against that youth's will, insist on giving him a lift home in his car.

The boy was sullen, even rude. Sitting grimly in the car, it was difficult to make him talk. Prevost had to make the attack direct.

"Were you engaged to Miss Marianhill?"

he asked bluntly.

"Was I?" cried the boy, with a note of amazement. "Was I engaged to her? I am." He stared across at Prevost. Realising things, he sat upright. "That's the meaning of it, then," he cried; "that's the reason she wasn't wearing my ring!"

He swallowed, sat staring at Prevost in

bitter rage.

"She's chucked you, then?" said Prevost

brutally.

"For you, I suppose!" The boy was almost weeping. "I've gone the way of Egerton and the others. I suppose you've got that pile."

"Something of a pile," said Prevost

urbanely. "Haven't you?"

"I've got more than Egerton—more than any of the rest had. Hang you! What does it matter what I have? That's my business. Only—only I might have known what would happen when real big money came along, knowing her as I do."

"Yes, you might have known that, and

been wise. Good night, my son."

And at the first respectable hour on the next day Prevost called on Berta. He did

not want to lose time. Steven Ingham, he knew, had a bigger pile than he had. Prevost was not the man to run risks.

There came a day some time later when Prevost asked Berta to lunch with him in one of the bright and glamorous restaurants of the town. Berta had been nervous during the past few days—not very nervous, only as nervous as one of her disposition could be. She had made inquiries of Prevost concerning the sailing of liners, especially liners from Brazil. She seized upon Prevost's invitation as a relief, and went gaily with him to the bright hub of good food and pretty frocks he had chosen.

In the foyer of the hotel he asked her to wait just a minute by herself. He had a trifle of business he must do. He left her there, exquisite and serene, assessing the value and the cut of feminine dresses. She was deep in this intoxicating amusement when she heard his voice behind her, heard him say in a loud and distinct voice, so that there should be no mistaking what

he said:

"Come along, old man. I want to introduce you to the girl I am going to marry." She swung round. "Steven, this is my fiancée, Berta Marianhill. Berta, this is my old friend Steven Ingham. Oh, but you know each other, don't you?"

And they shook hands, Berta smiling delightfully, without a tremor of emotion showing on her exquisite face, Steven with infinite courtesy, and the pallor, for all his deep sunburn, showing his unmistakable emotion.

So they talked a little, using forced brightness, and presently Prevost accepted Steven's feeble excuse to run away and see a man—that was part of his plan.

A week after Steven Ingham had sailed for the Amazon, to return to San Malachi and take up the work there that was his to do, and only he could do, Prevost sat down

and wrote to Berta.

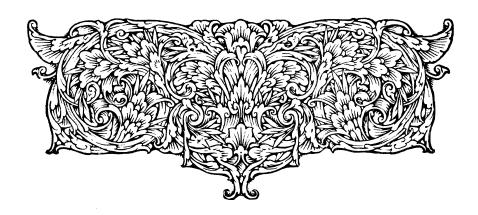
It was a very plain and definite statement. He said that the pile he thought was a big one had dwindled. He had found that he was far from being a rich man. In the circumstances he had been forced to accept a post as manager to a rubber estate in Malacca. He must earn his living. This being so, he thought it only right and proper to release her from her engagement, which he did.

He posted the letter, and his release was granted by Berta.

"It was brutal," he reflected, as he

steamed towards the East. "It was probably pretty low down, but there wasn't another way. Steven's work, San Malachi, all those poor blighters whose souls and happiness depend on Steven, were worth more than that girl. It would have been hell if Steven had been kept away from the work he ought to do by a girl of that kind, and he would have come to know that hell

in time." He thought again. "It was the girl or Steven's work, the big thing that is in him to do. I don't see what else I could have done. I don't see how else I could have stopped Steven. It was beastly, but Bobby had a pile, too. I wonder whether she has his ring on again? Poor Bobby, it's rotten for him, too! Heavens, why do such women exist?"



THE RIDING WINDS.

THE four winds move in the wide spaces,
The four winds live and die;
The wold-top fields are friendly faces
For men that dwell thereby.
Winds of the free wold, winds of the Riding,
How dear they are to me!
Far cornland in the grey mist hiding,
And distant spires to see.

When the strife dies and care is over,
And time it is to rest,
And strength shall fail that bore a rover
From east to farthest west,
I will go seek the friendly places
Beneath the Riding sky,
Where the winds move in the broad spaces,
And there my head shall lie.

ERIC CHILMAN.

THE REFORMATION MR. BUTTERMAN

LLOYD WILLIAMS

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

OME in, miss, and welcome," said Mrs. Butterman. "I'm thankful to say me 'usband's a little easier."

Joyce entered the cottage and looked Mrs. Butterman's cups round smilingly. and saucers, her few plates, the metal clock and the nickel tea-pot, shone as such articles shine in the most elevating story-books. The oilcloth was polished and neatly patched, the three chairs stood to attention, and a milk jug with a few wild flowers stood in the middle of a well-scrubbed table.

Mr. Butterman sat in the one easy-chair, his left foot swollen with bandages and resting on a stool.

"Pleased to see you, miss," he said, with a bright smile. "It's a fair treat to 'ave you

popping in friendly-like."
"I'm afraid I haven't brought much," said Joyce. "You had better take this basket, Mrs. Butterman, and pop its contents in your cupboard. And I've brought you something to read," she added, sitting opposite to the invalid.

Mr. Butterman did not even glance at the basket-nothing could be more delicately reserved than his attitude to the succulent morsels it contained—but he stretched out

his hand for the book.

" It's so hard to find anything you would enjoy," said Joyce. "This is 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' and I believe you'll like it."

"I will, miss," said Mr. Butterman reverently. "I read it when I was a nipper so 'igh." Mr. Butterman placed his hand about a foot from the ground to indicate his extreme youth when he revelled in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." "But I forget it, miss, and I'll be glad to read it agen. It's a good book, and no mistake."

He laid it on the shelf with a lingering look. "And 'ow's your lady mother, miss,

and your reverend father?"

" They are both well. Have you had many

"No, miss, I ain't. And I don't expect 'em," said Mr. Butterman softly. "I'm a black sheep, and what I says to the old woman is this: 'We ain't lived the lives we ought to 'ave lived, and we can't expect our neighbours to treat us friendly. . . . I don't know 'as 'ow it would be right.'

"I don't agree," said Joyce, with a charming frown. "You are a changed man, Mr. Butterman, and we ought to treat you as a friend. It makes me cross when people who don't know what temptation is put on

virtuous airs."

Mr. Butterman shook his head sadly

"When I reckon up what a terrible sinner I been, it makes me shudder." Mr. Butterman actually did shudder, so strongly was he moved by the blackness of his horrible past. "There ain't no sort o' wickedness I missed -picking pockets, three-card trick, longfirm swindle, confidence game, 'ousebreaking —I done 'em all in me time, miss."

A cynical person might have thought that Mr. Butterman spoke with faint regret for the spacious times when he led an active and nefarious life, but Joyce was almost in tears at the frank confession of his vileness.

"Five times I been to quod, miss, and if I 'ad what I deserve, I'd be there now," he continued, not without a touch of pride. "The missus ain't been so much better than me, but now we see the herror of our ways."

He sighed and opened a tobacco pouch absently. It was empty, and the sight of it reminded Joyce of what she had in her

"There now, I nearly forgot," she said. "I bought an ounce of tobacco as I came along. Now light your pipe and let me see you enjoy it."

"I've pretty near give up smoking, miss,"

said Mr. Butterman virtuously. "There's times when the longing comes over me, but as I says to the missus, 'I don't deserve to be 'appy.' 'Owever, since you puts it like that."

He filled his pipe instantly, pressing down the tobacco with a discoloured finger, and

Joyce rose to go.

"I think you are splendid, Mr. Butterman," she said fervently. "We are all sinners, when you come to think of it, and I know you've repented. When your foot is better, and you can get to work..."

"Ah, miss, now you're talking," said the retired thief, with a burst of emotion. "It's work I want. Let me get about, and earn some money for the old woman. . . ."

His feelings overcame him, and he covered his face with his hands, like a strong man

ashamed of his weakness.

"Settin' here with me 'ands empty is pretty nigh killing me," he groaned. "Me, that's always been a busy man. But there,

I ought not to complain.

Joyce's extremely pretty face was sorely troubled, for this beautiful spectacle of the wicked man come to the end of his days, and living in humble content, appeared to her a

most moving sight.

Indeed, she had fought many a tough fight for Mr. and Mrs. Butterman. Her father, the Vicar, would have nothing to do with them. Even her mother, the gentlest and most forgiving of souls, refused to concern herself with the Buttermans.

"Our resources are not unlimited, Joyce, and there are many people who are more

deserving."

Joyce pressed the point stoutly, and quoted Scripture to the effect that there was more joy over a repentant sinner than over ninety-and-nine pillars of the Church that have no occasion to repent. Her father smiled, as he so often did when his daughter joined issue on theological points, but said nothing. He was one of those exasperating men who dislike argument.

Joyce had carried her contention to many houses in the village, but public opinion was dead against her. Mick Butterman and his wife were both reprobates of the worst kind.

"A bad lot," said all and sundry. "You don't want to waste your time over them, my dear."

Yet Joyce succeeded better than she knew. The spectacle of a young and pretty girl fighting on behalf of two reprobates was a charming one; it was impossible to resist it, and the Vicar told his wife in private that though it would never do to encourage Joyce in her "sentimental fads," the girl's attitude was right.

"We must help the Buttermans, Molly, but we had better do it privately," he said.

Consequently, when Joyce was not at all likely to hear of it, Mrs. Vicar visited the Buttermans' model cottage, armed with five shillings from a mysterious "fund" at the Vicar's disposal, and sundry dainties from her own larder. The report she brought back was a glowing one—the cottage was spotless, Mr. Butterman's attitude to his dreadful past highly encouraging, and he was impatient to get well so that he might work honestly.

"Well, well, all that is first-class, my dear," said the Vicar. "Once in a way we will follow our daughter's admirable example, but we will do it in secret. What I dread is

making pets of these people."

"I'm afraid no one will help them but ourselves," said Joyce's mother, with a sigh. "You see, they have earned such a bad name in the place."

Yet, whatever his spiritual failings may have been, Butterman was wiser than his

more respectable neighbours.

"Shut that blinkin' door," he said

hoarsely, when Joyce had gone.

His wife obeyed in silence; she was a quiet woman, who seldom wasted words, and had long since given up the evil practice of disobeying her husband.

"Anyone comin' down the lane?" he

asked.

" No, it's all quiet."

"Give me a drop o' beer, quick. I'm fed up with that there gal," said the repentant sinner. "She gets on my nerves, with her 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' There's times when I can't hardly keep it up."

His wife looked at him anxiously.

"It'd be a pity to spoil it just when we're doing so nice," she said in a business-like tone. "Miss Tomkins come this morning, before you was up, and left 'alf a dozen eggs. She told me to tell no one she'd been."

Mick chuckled amiably. "It's a funny wheeze, and I don't 'ardly know how I come to 'it on it,' he muttered. "They all come bringing things, and they don't want no one to know. It's wonderful 'ow it works. But Mrs. Robinson ain't been along lately, 'as she? You'd better be on the look-out, and if you see 'er comin', you might start reading that book to me. Where's the paper?"

He got up from his seat with wonderful nimbleness for a man suffering with gout.



"I only sat on it just in time, as that blessed gal came in," he muttered. "Shove a bit o' paper in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' to mark the place where I ain't been reading. Now put the beer jug out o' sight, for if anyone-

"Someone's coming," said his wife hastily.

"Shove that paper away."

The sporting paper vanished as if by magic. "Oo is it?" growled Mick.

It's a gent, but I don't recognise 'im," said his wife. "I better be peeling the spuds and singing an 'ymn. It's wonderful how singing an 'ymn fetches 'em. in, sir."

A tall young man entered and looked round the model kitchen with a grin. He was about eight-and-twenty and well dressed in the careless, countrified fashion which is only possible to Englishmen.

"So this is where you live, you old sinner," he said, fixing Mr. Butterman

with a pair of amused eyes. "You were hardly quick enough with The Sportsman, I saw you hustle it away as I came down the lane. That's the worst of these well-cleaned windows. How do you do, Mrs. Butterman?"

" Nicely, thank you, sir," said the woman meekly, "and hoping you're the same."

She looked at her husband anxiously, as if awaiting a cue; but for once the astute Mr. Butterman hardly knew what line to take, and the corners of a humorous mouth were puckered up queerly.

His visitor was perhaps the most embarrassing person in the world in Mick's eyes, for David Hinckley knew his career backwards. David was a promising young barrister, who had had the privilege of pleading Mr. Butterman's unrighteous cause in the courts of law, and he knew his previous convictions" by heart.

It's a pleasure to see you, sir," said



Mick feelingly, "though I'll allow it brings back painful mem'ries. You are getting on a treat. The way you 'andled that Clapham ousebreaking case was A1. As I says to the missus, 'If it 'adn't been the prisoner was defended by Mr. Hinckley, 'e'd 'ave got seven years certain, and not a day more than he deserved.' As it was, you got 'im off with three. But you was always a knockout, sir."

David bowed before the delicate compliment, but seemed more amused than flattered. "Tell me all about yourself, Mick," he said, straddling a kitchen chair. "What particular line of wickedness are you practising just now?"

Mr. Butterman made an almost imper-

ceptible sign to his wife to withdraw.

"I've give it up, sir," he said gently. "I've come to see the herror of my ways, and I'll allow that it was you that done it. When you got me off with only six months at Clerkenwell, you said to me private, 'Mick,' you says, 'you are a thorough rascal, and it's time you changed.' I took it to heart, sir, and when I come out, me and the missus turns over a new lear. We are living 'ere

very quiet and respectable.'

A puzzled expression came over the London lawyer's face. He said "Oh!" as a man might say it on hearing that the railwaymen were going on strike for lower wages.

"I'm glad to hear it, old man," he remarked. "What's that book lying

there?"

"'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' sir," said Mick. "It's a favourite of mine, and it's been lent by a young lady that takes a hinterest in me. Not being able to work, I set'ere reading of it as you might yourself, and it does me good." Mr. Butterman handled the volume reverently. "I put a bit o' paper in it to mark the place," he added.

David opened the book and began to read it. "You have got to where Mr. Booker catches Topsy hiding in a pear tree," he

remarked.

"That's right, sir."

"How it all comes back to one!" murmured the young lawyer. "Did it make you laugh when the dog Fido stole Mr. Booker's dinner?"

"That it did, sir," remarked Mr. Butterman. "I laughed till the tears come pouring

down me cheeks."

"And then there's the bit where Uncle Tom takes his first flight in an aeroplane. Do you remember that?"

"I don't seem to call it to mind, sir," said

Mr. Butterman cautiously.

"Oh, but you couldn't possibly forget that," said David. "I'll read it aloud. 'As soon as Uncle Tom saw the aeroplane coming out of its shed, he started running for dear life. "It's a wild beast!" he cried in great alarm. "My word, it's gwine to eat us up!" Not for a long time could they persuade him to take his seat in the car.' Do you remember it now, Mick?"

"It's coming back, sir. The missus read it aloud last night, but I was feeling a bit

-a bit----'

David closed the book and put it on the mantelpiece. He was looking at Mr. Butterman fixedly, and the latter stammered. After looking round the room cautiously, he whispered: "Have I gone a mucker, sir?"

"I'm afraid so," said his visitor. "Topsy didn't climb a pear tree, and there is no dog Fido in the book. Moreover, when Uncle Tom flourished, aeroplanes were not in-

vented."

Mr. Butterman took a deep breath and grinned. "I knew you was codding me,

sir," he said eagerly, "and I jest wanted to see 'ow far——"

"No, Mick, it won't do," said Mr. Hinckley sadly. "Your story has broken down under cross-examination, as your stories always did. Now, perhaps, you will tell me the truth. What are you living on just now?"

Mr. Butterman cleared his throat. No one knew better than he when to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; it did not happen often, but once or twice in his lifetime it had paid him well.

"I can trust you as I wouldn't trust no one else, sir," he said engagingly. "You'd never deprive an old man of his bread. The

fact is, I'm a sort of village pet."

" Oh!"

The penitent sinner chuckled amiably.

"It's the Gospel trewf, sir. When we come 'ere, sir, me and the missus had a bit laid by, and I says to 'er: 'We'll go straight, old gal, and end our days comf'table,' I says. But the folks knew us a bit too well, and me and 'ard work never was very great friends. I goes to church reg'lar, and touches me 'at to the Vicar, but he was too deep. 'Butterman,' he says, 'when I see you working steady, I'll count you among my friends,' he says. 'Till then there ain't nothing doing.' Well, sir, I was in a fix, and it looked as if I'd 'ave to get busy, when the luck changed surprising.'

David handed his pouch to the old reprobate, and Mr. Butterman reloaded his pipe with an unsparing hand. "One day

Miss Joyce come in."

"Is Miss Joyce the pretty girl I met up the lane?"

"Like as not, sir," said Mr. Butterman briefly.

He glanced at the lawyer shrewdly, and noted a shade of discomfort in his face; then he lighted his pipe.

"Well, sir, she come to see me, and I tells 'er what an 'orrible sinner I been, and lays it on pretty thick. In fack, I makes meself out about twenty times wuss than I was."

"What an imagination you must have,

Mick!" said David admiringly.

"I says to 'er, 'I ain't fit for the likes o' you to come an' see me, miss,' I says. 'But I'm an invalid along o' my foot, and—'"

"I suppose there's nothing the matter

with your foot?" remarked David.

Mr. Butterman winked slowly and solemnly, but did not offer an explanation.

"'If you could let me 'ave one or two good books to read,' I says, 'I'd be grateful,

miss.' That done it. She brings me 'The Pilgrim's Progress' and one or two more, and I reads a few lines 'ere and there to get the patter right. But it works a treat. Miss Joyce tells everyone what an injured angel I be, and it's a puffick shame not to 'elp me. They don't believe 'er. They says, 'No,' they says, 'he's an old humbug, and it's wrong to encourage 'im.' But they comes along on the sly. ''Ere's five bob,' says the Vicar, 'though I don't believe you deserve it.' And 'is missus gives me some eggs and jelly and tea. Then there's Mrs. Robinson at the Post Office, and Mr. Symes, the Baptist minister, to say nothing of Mrs. Wells and Colonel Lupton. They all comes, having 'eard of me from Miss Joyce. And they all comes secret.'

Mr. Butterman chuckled huskily.

"I'm the village pet, sir," he concluded. For some time the two sat looking at one another. Presently David shook his head slowly, and Mick's eyes dropped.

"It won't do, Mick," murmured the lawyer. "I hate spoiling sport, but it simply

won't do."

Mick sighed with the air of a man willing to make allowance for one with narrow prejudices.

"When you stepped into the 'ouse, sir, I said to meself, 'The counsellor's goin' to spoil it,'" he murmured. "Personally, I

can't see nothing wrong."

"Your moral eyesight is oblique, Mick," said David. "But I will try to explain. I can't have you making use of that nice girl as a stalking-horse. You are fooling her. She believes in you, and—it grieves me to say it, Mick, but you don't deserve to be believed in. It must stop. What do you propose to do?"

Mick coughed. "I'd like to ask what you propose to do, gov'nor?" he said softly.

"No, Mick, the game is in your hands.

You must speak the truth."

A troubled look came into Mick's eyes. He had never held that the truth ought to be handled at random; it was a precious treasure only to be aired on state occasions.

"I shall go to the Vicarage," continued David, "and ask to see that extremely pretty girl, and bring her back with me. Then you will confess all in my presence. I

insist upon it."

Mrs. Butterman stood in the doorway with her apron to her eyes; she was understood to say it was like taking bread out of poor people's mouths, but her husband reproved her.

"Stow it!" he said in a husky voice. "Them tricks ain't no good with the counse'lor. 'E knows'em all. Right-o, sir," he added, turning to David blandly. "If you bring the young lady 'ere, I'll make a clean breast of everything. And then I'll throw meself on the mercy of the court. There's a bit I 'eard you say about the quality of mercy that meets the case a treat. 'It droppeth as the gentle rain from 'eaven,' and that's 'ow I like it to drop."

With a faint chuckle of amusement, Mr. Hinckley betook himself to the Vicarage, and in due course found himself face to face with Joyce. They had met casually in the village during his holiday, and it is possible that she had taken a passing interest in him, for her welcome was a gracious one.

"I've come to see you about Michael Butterman, Miss Buckle," said David. "I hate telling tales out of school, but the

fellow is a fraud."

Joyce drew herself up. Again and again she had done battle on behalf of Mick, and she was ready for the conflict anew. But David had but one reply to make. Would she be so good as to go down to the cottage with him and hear Butterman's confession? "I have defended the fellow in court, and know him well," he said. "It is a shame he

should impose on you."

Side by side they walked to the pet's home, and there the unmasking was done in Joyce's presence. Mick confessed that his left foot was as sound as his right; he had not read any of the books she had brought him, but had merely committed a few words to memory for the sake of effect; he and his wife had been living for weeks on the bounty of Joyce's friends—including both her parents—and while she believed herself to be his only champion, she was but one of many.

Above all, he had grossly exaggerated his own misdeeds in order to colour his alleged repentance. He had been to gaol once; the rest of his sinful life had been devoted to

artful begging.

Curiously enough, as he stood there listening and watching the girl's face, a strange feeling of uneasiness stole over David Hinckley. No doubt he had done what was right, yet he had destroyed something—he had robbed this girl of her warm trust in human nature. She had taken a pleasure in doing what she believed to be a good work in the teeth of public disapproval, and he had shown it to be folly.

He watched her face go whiter as she realised it all, and he saw tears gather

in her eyes.

"Thank you," she said, when Mick had finished. "I am glad you have told me all, Mr. Butterman, and I shall be obliged to tell everyone clse, for I feel myself responsible. But I shall remain your friend in spite of all."

She drew herself up slightly, an adorably slim, proud little figure, and looked at David

haughtily

"I believe there are thousands of virtuous people in the world who are not a bit better than you," she added. "After all, I would rather be the Publican in the parable than the Pharisee."

She passed out into the sunshine, and the London barrister stood there trying to think of a suitable retort. He was famed for his smart replies, but this time his wit failed

him.

"What a jolly nice girl she is, Mick!" he muttered. "How could you be such a brute as to fool her? But there, it's no good talking. Here are three pounds, my friend, just by way of a start. But you must work. Do you understand? I will add a sixpence to every shilling you earn honestly, and in a month I shall run down here to see what you are doing. Now, buck up and play the man. Good morning."

He would have liked to stroll up to the Vicarage with Joyce, but no such thing was possible, and with a sad sigh he turned his

steps in the opposite direction.

"You've been and done it," said Mrs. Butterman bitterly. "You've been and put your foot in it a treat just as we was gettin' on so nice."

"'Ave I?'" Michael Butterman was lost in dreamy thought. "I ain't so sure, lovey. I've got a notion I've made our blinkin' fortunes."

II.

"When will he be home, Mrs. Butterman?"

"Not before seven, miss. You see, he's working overtime along o' Farmer Brown's harvest."

"How splendid of him!" said Joyce.

Mrs. Butterman had had her cue from her lord and master, and had taken it up faithfully.

"Yes, miss. It was that Mr. Hinckley done it," she said. "He's made me 'usband work as he never worked before."

Joyce frowned; she could never hear Mr. Hinckley's name without exhibiting signs of disapproval. But Mrs. Butterman's

orders were to "Take no notice, but go straight a'ead."

"Wonderful clever young gentleman, he is, and no man ever 'ad a better friend," she said. "Every time me 'usband earns a quid, 'e planks down ten bob to keep it company"

"I must be going."

"Sorry, miss. I only wanted to show you the letter he wrote." When Mrs. Butterman wanted to say something, you could never stop her—a quiet woman, but singularly persistent. "'Ere it is. 'I'll expect you to do me credit, and, if ever you get into trouble, go to that nice girl at the Vicarage and ask her advice.' There's a lot more of it, miss."

"I'm afraid I really can't stop," said Joyce, with rising colour, and hurried away. But when she looked in at the cottage on Saturday afternoon, she could not escape

Mick like that.

"I feel fine, miss," he remarked heartily. "And it's all the counsellor's doing—'im and you between you, as you may say. The last time 'e was ere he says, 'A man would be a fool who wouldn't work the flesh off 'is bones for a nice-looking young lady like that,' he says. 'I never saw no one——'"

"I had no idea it was so late," remarked

Joyce.

"That clock's fast," said Mick placidly. "What was I saying, miss? To be sure! 'I never saw such a pretty creature in my life,' he says. 'And I've seen all the prettiest girls in London town, not to mention Paris and 'Omburg, where the 'ats come from.'"

Joyce refused to be detained, because she was sitting on the concert committee, but

Mick followed her to the door.

"' A fair English rose.' That's what the counsellor calls you, miss, and I'll allow he's a judge," he persisted. "I wish you could see 'ow them London girls chivvy 'im up and down the town. He——"

But Joyce had escaped, and her ears were tingling with information which she assured herself "was not in the least interesting."

Mick returned to his chair and summoned his wife to a conference. "Ol' gal," he said gravely, "this here life of 'ard work don't suit me. If it goes on much longer, I'll 'ave to join a union or summat. Same time, our little game's working a treat. Did you see 'er colour up when I told 'er what the counsellor didn't say, only 'e would if 'e didn't think it beneaf his dignity to talk about 'er to you and me? 'As 'is letter come?"

Yes, a letter had come from David Hinckley, enclosing Mick's bonus for last week, which amounted to twelve and sevenpence. He pocketed it with a grunt. But the news the letter contained was of greater consequence. Mr. Hinckley was visiting the village that week-end; he proposed to attend divine service at the parish church in the morning, but would call at Mick's cottage in the afternoon and smoke a pipe with him, and further amplify his views on a strenuous and wage-earning existence.

"This wants 'andling," he said thoughtfully. "I reckon we've reached the crisis, as the doctors say. I don't 'ardly know 'ow

to go on."

"Suppose you was to ask 'er to——"

Mrs. Butterman was cut short.

"You 'old your tongue," he said briefly. "Cackle ain't goin' to elp us. This wants brains. Give me my baccy jar and shift these 'eavy boots off me feet. I'll 'ave to think quiet."

Mrs. Butterman obeyed quickly, for her husband had kept her unspotted from modern doctrines as to a wife's true position in the home, and the great man subsided in

deep thought.

Next day, being Sunday, he arrayed himself in his best and attended church; there he sang the hymns with a lusty vigour which must surely have reached the Vicarage pew even if it did not ascend to the gates of heaven. David Hinckley was present, stalwart, well-dressed, and unmistakably the Londoner. His eyes wandered frequently to a Leghorn hat in the Vicarage pew, but the eyes beneath the Leghorn hat never wandered towards him. the service the young barrister stood at the door and bowed to the Leghorn hat, and the Leghorn hat was dipped slightly, though its wearer passed on with dignity. Mick, observing this, sighed deeply. Brains were surely wanted.

In the afternoon David called at Mick's cottage, and the two men smoked pipes with due solemnity. David congratulated his friend on his improved moral outlook: Mick acknowledged the tribute unblushingly, and waited patiently for the conversation to drift to a topic that was not likely to be

overlooked.

"You have got me into complete disgrace with Miss Buckle," said David at last. Apparently I shall never be forgiven."

"I'm afraid not, sir," said Mick dolefully. "Miss Joyce comes to see us reg'lar, but she ain't the gal she used to be."

" Not ill, I hope?" said David anxiously. "Sick at 'eart, sir," said Mick. "It ain't for me to give a young gal's secrets away. I wouldn't do it. But when 'er parents are trying to drive 'er into a marriage with a young feller she ain't set on, and the young feller she is set on ain't exactly-

there, it's no good talking."
David looked uneasy. "But surely Mr. and Mrs. Buckle would never press her to marry anyone she didn't like?"

"Don't ask me, sir," said Mick con-

scientiously.

There was not a syllable of truth in his suggestion of an approaching marriage, but Mick had devoted many hours of an illspent life to a close study of Drury Lane drama, and realised the inspiring effect of rivalry.

"She's a sweet-natured gal," he added, with a shake of his head. " Proud! Oh, yes, sir. She's proud, and she'd never let on what her true feelings was. She'll set 'ere talking about you to me by the 'our.'

" Nonsense!"

"Fact, sir," said Mick resolutely. "Seems sometimes as if she can't 'ear enough about When I tells her you're one of the risingest young lawyers in London, she pretty near clapped 'er 'ands."

"I believe you are making this up, Mick."

Mick looked hurt.

"Same time, it ain't your cleverness that she's so set on," he added. "'It's 'is kind 'eart,' she says more than once. maybe I've told you more than I ought."

David rapped out his pipe and sprang up. "I suppose there's no chance of her coming here this afternoon, Mick," he remarked. I would like to get a chat with her."

"Not this afternoon, sir," said Mick virtuously. "Knowing you're in the village, she'll never come near the place, fearing she'd meet you—she's that proud. But if you was 'ere to-morrow morning----"

"I return to Town to-night as usual,"

said David.

"About eleven in the morning she'll be calling on the missus," murmured Mick, and if you was settin' here-

"I've got a case at the Bailey Sessions."

Ah, that's a pity."

"To be sure, I could send a wire for someone else to take it."

Mick nodded like a man whose thoughts were fixed on other things. "You couldn't afford to be money out of pocket, sir," he said.

"I don't care a tinker's curse about the

fee," muttered David. "If I thought she-"

"Then there's the cost of a telegram," said Mick. "I lay that would run you into

a couple of bob."

David stared at him for an instant, and stalked out of the cottage without a word, but Mick chuckled. "Missus," he said in a husky whisper, "I've done the trick. I won't be going to work to-morrow, because I've got to put the finishing touch to the job."

Next morning Mick put his finishing touch with a sure hand. Joyce arrived at the cottage a few minutes before eleven, and, before she quite knew what she was doing, Mrs. Butterman—acting on her husband's orders—had inveigled her into sampling one of her home-made jam tarts. It was a decidedly jammy and luscious tart, and required time for its consumption. Before Joyce was half-way through it, David arrived.

"It's worked a treat," muttered Mick. "Good day, sir. I understood you to say you'd got a big case in London this morning. You'd better try one of the missus's tarts,

the same as Miss Joyce."

It may not sound romantic, but Mick's manœuvres succeeded where greater subtlety might have failed. However indignant a young woman may feel with a man, or think she feels, she cannot rush out into the open air with a jam tart in her hand, and polite regard for Mrs. Butterman's feelings forbade her to abandon it. Moreover, a jam tart suggests a certain gaiety of outlook; almost before they realised it, two young people were comparing notes upon jam tarts they had met elsewhere, and they agreed heartily that Mrs. Butterman's confection was "absolutely topping."

"Won't you have another, miss?" inquired the housewife, obeying a silent

order from her lord.

Mick's attitude was that of a philosopher

contemplating human nature from a loftier plane. How did it happen? Joyce could not possibly eat another; neither could David. Yet it ended in one being divided between them. Presently they strolled away side by side, utterly oblivious of Mick and his intrigues; they strolled along the lane, missed the turning to the Vicarage, missed the turning to the village, found themselves on the downs, crossed the Wey, missed their way at Weyford, and returned to a matter-of-fact world in a motor.

Not till five in the afternoon did David appear in Mick's cottage, and the hero of a hundred misdeeds gathered that everything was settled; David was the betrothed husband of Miss Buckle; Mr. and Mrs. Buckle had accepted the situation, not without gentle astonishment at its suddenness, and David was in the mood to jump over the moon or do something monstrous.

"I have to thank you, you old sinner," he said boisterously. "Shake hands, Mick."

"Do me proud, sir," said Mick modestly. "When I go to me daily work, earning me bread by the sweat of me brow, I'll be saying to myself: 'You done someone a good turn, Mick, and 'e won't forget you.'"

" Not likely," said David.

"'You're growing old, Mick,' I'll be saying to meself, 'and you ain't so vigorous as you used to be. But work's good for you,' I'll say. 'It's what you was born to.'"

David threw back his head and laughed. "I see what you are driving at, Mick. I shall have to talk it over with Miss Joyce."

Mick's view of what was fitting prevailed; he had finished with the work which he loathed. About twenty miles from London there is a pleasant house where a rising lawyer and his wife dwell. Near the house is a comfortable cottage, where Mick and his wife dwell.

Mick is officially Mr. Hinckley's gardener. But Mr. Hinckley does the work himself.



THE PURSUER

By M. L. C. PICKTHALL

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GILLETT

ALLETT stood at full height on the little mound. He raised his arms and shouted suddenly in a wild, cracked voice, as a man shipwrecked might shout "Land!" Only Hallett shouted "Trees!"

Deane climbed the mound, trembling. " Where ? "

" There!"

" Ain't it grey haze ?"

"No. I tell you it's green. It's trees!" Suddenly they both fell into fits of uneasy laughter. They slapped each other hard on the back, raising white clouds from their dust-sodden shirts. "We've done it!" crowed Hallett. "We've beat it, Willy!"

"We've beat it," echoed Deane.
"We've done it! We've come through!

We've licked it for fair, Willy!"

Deane said: "Licked it for fair." spoke spitefully and glanced back as if he thought someone had followed and was listening.

"Come on," said Hallett. They went down the mound and towards the shadow

Hallett had a black felt hat on the back of his head. His face had lost the likeness of flesh, it was so burned and caked with the desert dust. He carried a black coat folded neatly over his arm. Deane had dropped his coat long ago.

Hallett left behind him-had left for miles—a trail of deep, evenly-placed footprints. He strode just so, and one guessed he would stride like that to the last footprint, where he would drop. Deane's trail was uneven. In some places he had hurried, in some lingered to look back and listen.

Forty, fifty, sixty miles behind them those differing trails were yet marked on

They went on towards the trees. The shifting dazzle hid them. After an hour Deane panted: "You sure you them?"

"Sure," said Hallett steadfastly.

Deane swerved. They were passing through a belt of sage. It was dry ground, and each bush was spaced in an exact radius of some twenty feet. Deane suddenly gripped one of these bushes and tried to tear it from the ground. But his hands slipped. He was left with nothing in his hold but dust.

"What you doin', Willy?" asked Hallett

in amazement.

"I hate it," panted Deane, "I hate it!" After a silence Hallett said: "It ain't done you any harm, after all, Willy. We come through it all right. In an hour or two we'll be safe."

"I don't feel-

"What?" asked Hallett curiously.

"Nothing." Deane began to walk very fast, so that he was soon ahead of Hallett. Hallett watched him keenly.

In a little while he shouted: "You're bearin' to the right, Willy!"

Deane took no notice.

Again Hallett cried: "You're off the line, son! Stop for me."

Deane stopped quite still. When Hallett reached his side, he was shaking. He said in a low voice: "What was I doin'?"

"Workin' round in a circle, son."

They went on together. Deane said: "I've

lost even that to it."

"Pshaw!" answered Hallett heartily. "It don't matter. We're safe—we're through with it. And, say, is there anything makes a man feel so good as doin' what they said couldn't be done?"

Deane did not answer. He looked behind

him.

In an hour they could see a straggling line of trees that seemed to follow some watercourse. They pushed forward. they advanced they were suddenly enveloped in a cool purple shadow. A range of hills, invisible in the haze, had hidden the sun, and in a little while it would be night. Deane broke into a run.

"What's the hurry?" asked Hallett.



"Deane suddenly gripped one of these bushes and tried to tear it from the ground. But his hand slipped.

Deane looked round. "A splash," he gasped—"I heard a splash."

Hallett began to run, too.

They pushed through the scrub that fringed the watercourse. It was little more—a straight cutting in the desert with a few linked pools at the bottom. But those bitter pools were a wall of defence built between them and fear.

They crossed the watercourse before they tore off their clothing and pitched each into a pool, drinking, rolling, swearing, weeping.

After a while Hallett crawled out and

After a while Hallett crawled out and began to make ready a fire. He did not put on his clothes. He wanted to feel the water chilling on his bare body in the radiation from the ground.

Presently Deane called to him: "Say.



He was left with nothing in his hold but dust. 'What you doin', Willy?' asked Hallett in amazement."

Hallett, we goin' to camp here t' night by this river?"

"It ain't a river, sonny. It's an ole irrigation canal." Hallett's voice came abstractedly between puffs as he blew at the tiny sticks.

"Why's it so far out in the desert?"

"I guess the desert's gained on it. Sometimes the water fails. See these trees?

Them in the second line's dyin'. I guess the town had to move back. . . ."

Soon Deane went to Hallett, who had the fire going. Deane was dressed. He had his boots on and his hat. Hallett stared at him.

"Say, Hallett," he said uneasily, "let's push on to the town."

"But this is a fine place, Willy—a fine place. And we're safe."

"Aw, Hallett, let's push on to the town! I ain't tired."

"But—I dunno how far the town is now, son." A tiny flame, solitary in the immense translucent twilight, showed Hallett's worn, astonished face, dark as wood over his white shoulders. Glancing uneasily aside, Deane saw a star dawn in the nearest

"Aw, Hallett," he said, with a sudden queer whimper in his voice, "aw, I can't bear to see them stars over me in the night!

I can't bear it again, Hallett."

Without a word Hallett rose, beat out the

tiny fire, and made ready to go on.

They went on, far into the night. They moved mechanically. They were desperately weary. They seemed to have entered the desert again. Now and then Deane was held by the fancy that they had turned round and were walking back the way they had come. He paused often to look behind him. As long as he saw the line of dying trees, he felt safer.

Towards midnight they crossed two other Things—ghosts of abandoned channels. things-began to appear from the sands; here a post, there a few boards, again what

might have been a wall.

They were crossing the original site of the town to which they travelled.

Perhaps they slept on their feet. Anyway, it was suddenly that they realised they moved on a path, a road, between fields of alfalfa.

They could smell the green leaves. They

could hear running water.

Hallett touched Deane gently on the arm. He said: "We're safe, Willy—safe. . . .

"Come on," answered Deane feverishly.

"I want to find a house."

Soon, awe-struck, they moved through the streets of a little town. The sleeping houses assailed their senses as with blows or yells. They felt pressed, hustled with life. One or two men passed them, and they turned and stared. They would have spoken, but their throats were dry and they felt shy.

The farther they went through the sleeping town, the greener it became. Even the appalling clarity of the stars seemed dimmed a little, as if by a kindly breath.

Hallett said: "There's the ho-tel. . . . " Deane pleaded: "A little farther on.

Just a step farther away."

"We won't find a place to sleep," expostulated Hallett, "and I'm all in. All these folks is asleep. What'd they think of us-"

"Here," said Deane suddenly—"we'll

stop here."

The small square houses on the opposite side of the town stood in gardens, backed by pleasant young tree-tops and pumpwheels, beautiful in their eyes. One house had a white gate. On this gate a woman leaned, looking toward them.

Hallett shook the dust from the black coat he had carried carefully all the way,

and put it on.

When they were near, she said in a curious dulled voice that yet they heard "You lookin' for a place to clearly: sleep?"

"Yes, ma'am. We just made the town

this evenin'."

"Come in."

She opened the gate for them. As it shut behind them with a small sound, more human than the woman's voice, Deane said to himself: "Safe! Safe!"

They followed her to a porch on which were two or three chairs and a table behind a pretty screen of vines. On the table was a lamp. This she lit, calling at the same time: "Darrel, Darrel!" She said to Hallett: "My brother'll be right down, and meantime I'll be gettin' you some supper."

"You're good, ma'am, you're good—and

it's so late an' all."

She said: Her eyes turned on them.

You're from the desert?"

"Yes." For all his weariness Hallett stood square on his feet with proud eyes. "We come right across from Rio Verde," he told her, as if he were talking of the sea, "and they said it couldn't be done. But we done it!" he chuckled.

"We got through," affirmed Deane's

younger voice; "we got away. . . . "

She looked steadily at Deane. A horror was in her eyes; her look was in some way an echo of his voice. She pushed chairs for them. "Sit down," she said; her words sounded dull yet distinct, as if she spoke in the midst of a vast space. They dropped into the chairs. She went indoors to get them food as a tall grey man came out and sat on the third chair and talked to them.

They nearly slept over the meal. When it was done, Darrel took them to two tiny rooms at the back of the house and shut

them in.

Before he slept, Deane stood on his bed and rested his two hands on the ceiling over his head. "Safe," he whispered, "safe." Then he shook his fist at nothing. "You won't get me now," he said savagely;

" we've beat you! I'm free." He dropped

on the cot and slept like a child.

He woke to a sound of leaves rustling and to a sense of renewed personality. seemed to have left himself behind with each step he took in the desert, his individuality drained away into the emptiness. Now, with miles of houses and fields and irrigating ditches between himself and the thing, he was once more strongly Willy

When he went down, breakfast was laid on the table in the porch, and Hallett was helping the grey man Darrel in the garden. He joined them. Darrel said: "You all right?"

"Sure," said Deane loudly, "it'd take more than the crossin' from Rio Verde to

do for us, eh, Hallett?"

"There's some can't do with the desert," answered Darrel quietly, "and some can't do without it.... Me, I ain't set eyes on it these ten years." He pulled up some blades of grass from his vegetables, and Deane thought it wasteful to kill anything that was green.

"You got a fine place here," said Deane,

"a right pretty place."

"It's the water does it," nodded Darrel. "Wonderful, ain't it? . . . But it ain't my place. It's my brother-in-law's."

"He away?"

"Yes....I guess Marna has the breakfast laid."

When they were at the table, Deane said: "It must have taken a long while to make this place so nice."

The woman, Darrel's sister, looked at them. "Nearly twenty years," she agreed. "We was among the first to come here."

Looking at the flowers, Deane cried: " If this place was mine, I couldn't quit it a day, ma'am. No, I couldn't. It's the kind of place a man could spend his life in, I should say; it's so green, so sheltered, so-

"So safe?"

The smile went from Deane's pleasant, weak face. "Why, yes," he agreed slowly, "anyone'd feel pretty safe here." He tried to laugh. His mouth had suddenly dried again.

"We're very comfortable," said the woman; "my brother Darrel and I keep things goin' when my husband's away. . . .

My name's Firth."

Later in the morning Deane and Hallett went to the town. Hallett met a man he knew. This man knew many men, and soon all these men were known to Hallett and Deane, and wanted to hear the story of the crossing from Rio Verde. They were sober men, storekeepers, fruit-growers, engineers, all living for and by the power of water. Most of them seemed to think Hallett and Deane were fools, but they were very friendly. One said to Deane: "What did you think of the desert?"

"Oh, I dunno. It's pretty lonesome."

"It scares some fellers."

"Didn't scare me," said Deane loudly, as if someone besides these new friends listened to him.

"What did you do it for?" asked

another.

"For fun," laughed Deane, drinking. He was drinking a good deal and talking more. He liked these men. They and their businesses and their interests, all bent on the defeat of the desert, made him

feel trebly safe.

Towards evening they went back to Mrs. Firth with a sense that they were going The little square house behind the white gate gave them greeting. Their chairs were ready for them on the porch, and Darrel, with his feet up on the rail, looked at them kindly and shyly. He was a silent shadow of a man, but they felt in him an obscure good-will.

Deane gathered the good-will of all these strangers towards him greedily, as a man would draw a coat over him in a storm. He felt very happy. When Mrs. Firth came out with a white cloth, he spread it on the table for her, and helped her place the supper things. He asked her the name of the vine that grew over the porch. She said she thought it was canary vine; her husband had brought the first seed from the East; it took a lot of water.

"Well, you can spare it," said Deane.
"Yes. We've plenty here. It w different when we was first married and lived farther out in the desert. The water failed where they first built the town.'

" But it won't fail here."

"No. We're safe."

There was something fine and beautiful to Deane in the thought of that safety behind the thousand activities of men and the presence of the water. Tears stung his This small house, near the desert, but bravely and securely defying it, seemed to him the loveliest place in the world. It had given him his own soul again.

He laid his hand, palm up, on the clean cloth in a kind of appeal. "See here, Mrs. Firth," he said, "I look pretty poor, but I got money in the bank, back at Rio Verde. I'm well fixed. I been looking a long while for a place to settle down in.

All eyes, just above the circle of light from the lamp, glinted towards him with a surprised attention—Darrel's, Hallett's, the woman's. He laughed consciously. There was a silence. He heard the sound of his own laugh, and it seemed boastful. He moved uneasily.

"Don't take it amiss," he said, "but—when Mr. Firth comes back, would you object if I asked him to name a price for

this place?"

In the pause that followed, Darrel turned his grey head slowly and looked at his sister.

She watched Deane without speaking. In a moment she said very slewly: "You

want to buy this place?"

"If—if you wouldn't object. If the price ain't too high. I never seen a place Î liked so much, Mrs. Firth."

"You've forgot what other places 're

"Maybe," said Deane awkwardly, "but this place suits me. A man 'd feel kind of secure here. But if you've any objection, ma'am . . ."

Mrs. Firth thrust her face forward. was suddenly fierce, keen, in some strange way young. "Me!" she cried harshly. "I'd sell the house for five dollars right now, if I could, and go - go, but I can't!"

Darrel stretched out his hand, which closed on her wrist. "Marna," he said softly, "Marna!" There was a protective gentleness in his voice. She sat silent, breathing

hard, gazing at Deane.

"Of course," he stammered, surprised at her inexplicable passion, "you couldn't do nothing in the matter till Mr. Firth comes home. I see that, ma'am." He was desperately anxious to please her. "But I ain't in any hurry. I could wait . . ."

His voice dropped. Again she leaned forward. She was within a foot of him, but she spoke as if from an invisible vast

"I been waitin'," she said, "waitin' ten years for my husband to come home."

"Marna!" came Darrel's voice, with exquisite tenderness.

Looking into her lamp-lit eyes, Deane was suddenly afraid. They seemed to reflect something which he had hidden even from himself. And now her face was old, grey, a dust seemed to have been laid on the life of it. .

"What?" he asked uneasily. "What you mean . . .?"

"He went back to the desert," she said. All the weariness of the ten years spoke in her. To Deane the night was filled with

her small dull voice.

"I told you," she said, "that we lived out yonder on the edge of the desert when we was first married. When the town moved back here, we moved with it. Soon as we come here, we done well, as you see. But I guess it was too late."

"Too late?"

"The desert. The desert don't always let go of a man." Her fierce eyes brooded on Deane.

"He—he quit?"

"Yes. Quit me and the place without a word. He was a good man. It was just the desert . . . He had to go back."

Her face worked. "I been waitin' here, keepin' the place together, ten years,

in case he should come back.

"Marna!" came her brother's gentle

voice. "Marna!"

The lamp flame jumped. It was as if all those still faces about it had flamed to passion and cried aloud. A wind had blown through the leaves, passed across them with a dry breath and a rustle on the table, and

The woman's voice came dully out of the silence. "See," she said, "there's no gettin' away from it."

Deane stooped.

A tiny drift of alkali dust lay on the table. And as he looked, the thing came near, stood over him, he felt again his own being lost, drained away, swallowed up. Again he was circled with pitiless distance, burned with pure heat, shrivelled with fervent frost, roofed with unendurable stars. There was no escape. He knew. The thing had He, too, would have to go back to find himself.



THE ART OF ENJOYMENT.

MOTHER: Now, don't you begin to 'owl. Why don't you enjoy yer 'oliday like yer father does?

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

RAILWAY REFORM.

When, obedient to the requests to be early with it, I went away for my holiday, I was the happiest man in Suburbia. Now the prohibitive price of prussic acid is a personal grievance with one so bent on suicide as myself. Heroically wiping the tears from this paper with the bath sponge, I will tell you all about it.

As soon as ever we were engaged, Phyllis took my education in hand. My profound ignorance in matters artistic was, she said, a great trial to her. How, she asked, could she respect a man who forgot to shudder when the Royal Academy was mentioned, or thought Dickens the equal of various foreign authors whose names, when pronounced, suggested incipient whooping cough? It was in vain that I mentioned thrift, industry, and the authorship of two Limericks, very popular in their day in the regiment, as claims to her respect. In the end I had to agree to improve my mind under her guidance.
"We must do all the galleries," she declared,

"the Natural History, the Tate-"
"And the pit," I went on, catching the idea at once, "the Gaiety, the Shoreditch Empire-

"And the museums," she added. And that is how our tour began.

One afternoon each week we devoted to my education, choosing a different collection each time, and flitting from show-case to show case like bees on a herbaceous border. I was surprised to find we were not alone in this. Quite a number of people seemed to be on a similar quest after culture. We got to know them by their look of conscientious weariness. Intelligent police officers, I noticed, often told them the way to the tea-room without being asked.

By the time I went away we had done most of the better-known museums; but my education was not yet complete—it was merely suspend∈d -and so interested had I become in the study of antiquities that I positively thrilled when my boarding-house sent up a chicken that was obviously prehistoric. I thrilled, too, when Phyllis wrote suggesting that I should travel early on the day of my return, and take her to an outlying museum that we had not yet studied. I thrilled, and agreed by return of

In the secluded retreat that I had chosen for my holiday I knew little of what was going on in the great world outside. The quarrels of the bathers as to who should have next use of the overcrowded sea, the siren call of the hoky poky man, these fell upon my ears; the

problem of whether the voice of the concertparty's tenor was due to adenoids or willpower, this engaged my attention, but of more important things I recked not. Hence my downfall.

I got to the London terminus on the great day in nice time to catch the train for the suburban station where one alights for the museum that Phyllis had chosen, and where also, by the way, she was to meet me by Enwrapped in dreams of her, appointment. I showed my season at the barrier and got into the train.

Before my holidays I had known this particular train well as a staid old party, not much good for speed, but an excellent stayer. What I did not know was that in my absence the company had juggled with its thyroid gland by

my explanations, she added that "Nothing, nothing could excuse such behaviour."

That was not, of course, the absolute end. Even a worm will turn, and it is not unlikely that I did get a little rotatory. At any rate, we parted for ever, and I was left to learn the bitter lesson that it is easier to buy a ring than to part with it again at anything like its true value.

At the thought my tears flow afresh, and now I have mislaid that bath sponge. How Fate does hate me, to be sure!



THE new maid, under the direction of her new mistress, was washing a valuable cut-glass pitcher. Once it slipped out of her hands,



RATHER LARGER.

YOUTHFUL HOLIDAY-MAKER (whose bathing experience has been limited to the bathroom at home): Take me out, daddy-it's too full!

means of a new time-table, and made it young and active again-so young and active that it whizzed through my station like-well, like a train that did not stop there. The imitation was absolutely lifelike. True, it stopped shortly afterwards to look at the scenery, but my courage was not equal to the task of getting out and sprinting back along the permanent way. I had to wait for another station and a train back. And, believe it or not (probably not), this in its turn missed my unimportant station, so that it was not until my third attempt that I really arrived, very late, but, I hoped, very welcome. Vain hope!

"The man who would expect me to wait now," was Phyllis's greeting, "will expect me to cook his meals as well later on." And, cutting short but fortunately did not smash. The second

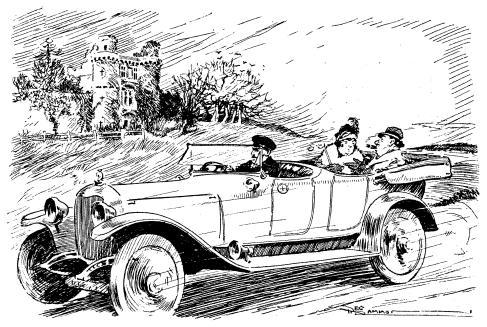
time it was shattered into bits. "Dear me," exclaimed the owner, "and

that's twice you dropped it in five minutes!"
"I know it, mum," said the maid, "but it didn't break the first time.



"Why don't you get rid of that horse if he's so vicious?" a ked one farmer of another.

"Well, you see, Jim," replied the other, "I hates to give in. If I was to sell that horse, he'd regard it as a personal victory. He's been tryin' for the last six years to get rid of me."



AN AMBIGUOUS PHRASE.

"That eastle goes back to William the Conqueror, M'ria." What for? Ain't it what they want?"



COMPARING NOTES.

CLARA (after listening to Brine's tale of a terrible gale that swept Shrimpton-on-Sea): Tell 'im 'ow I 'ad my 'at blowed off the tram at 'Ighgate, Alfred!

GRANDFATHER.

Grandfather can't remember
Half so well as me!
Why, I'd a birthday last November,
When I was only three,
And I remember the cake for tea!

And I can quite remember, When I was tiny wee— Long before last November— I was frightened of the sea, And the cat was bigger than me! admitted Harry, "and I couldn't remember the arithmetic very well, nor the geography."

The mother showed her disappointment, but

Harry had consolation in reserve.

"But that's no matter, mother," he said; "the boys admire me; they say I've got the biggest feet in the class!"



THE profiteer was showing a party of guests over his palatial residence. They reached the bathroom, and the host proceeded, with pardon-



A WORD IN SEASON.

"Why didn't yer swipe it, Bill?"

"Nah, then, none of yer bloomin' barrackin'!"

But Grandfatner can't remember Half so well as that!
Not cakes in last November,
Or being littler than the cat.
Grandfather can't remember
Long before he was three,
Although he's older than me!

Emily Westrup.



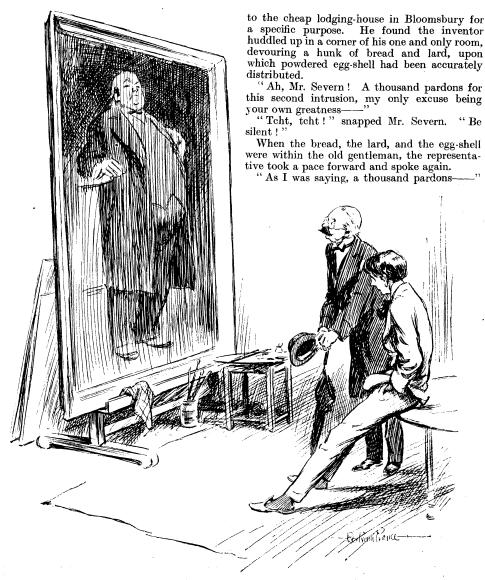
"How did you get on with spelling?" Harry's mother asked him, after his first day at school. "You look so pleased that I'm sure you did well."

"No, I couldn't spell much of anything,"

able pride, to point out the beautiful glazed tiles, the silver fittings, and heated towel-rails, and numerous other elegant contrivances for making ablutions a pleasure. "Now," he said, "you can understand how I look forward to Saturday nights."



The scene was the interior of a picture palace, and the film being shown was "Birds in Their Native Haunts," the orchestra playing appropriate music. "Fancy they little sparrers bein' so tame!" remarked one of the audience. "You'd think the music would frighten them away!"



A PAINTER OF THOUGHT.

CRITIC: This portrait of Mr. Bulger-Brown is much more than life size, surely? ARTIST: Yes. That's the size he thinks he is.

A REFLECTION.

The Morning Barrage lifted up its headlines and screamed scoop:—

STARTLING DISCOVERY.

GIGANTIC NATURAL POWER CAN BE TRAPPED For Use in Workshop and Home.

No More Coal! No More Gas! Fruits of Inventor's Lifelong Research.

The Morning Barrage representative, who had discovered the discoverer, accepted the congratulations of the editorial staff and returned

"Tcht, tcht, tcht, you said it! Proceed from the word 'greatness."

"— greatness, and — er — ah — a grateful public's curiosity as to the life, manners, customs, hobbies, and relations of the century's genius. Of all these, perhaps unperceived by you, I have already amassed copious notes, but, if I may do so, I would put to you one more question of a leading nature.

"You gave me to understand that you owe your success, your magnificent historical discovery, exclusively to concentration of mind. For over thirty-three years you have focused every ray of a superfine intelligence upon this Working day in, day out, and invariably far into the night, you stinted neither youth nor fortune, but rather chose to strive heroically on in quest of a solution which must necessarily prove world-revolutionising and beneficial to all creeds and classes of mankind. You at least will not be able to use that classic utterance of David Livingstone, 'So much to do-so little done,' for here, in the early eventide of your life, you have mastered—yes, mastered—the law of control——"

Inexact throughout," "Teht, teht, teht! commented Severn, opening one eye for a bare moment. "Proceed from the word 'control."

"May I inquire, on behalf of a proud nation

but at that moment a thought struck him, and he went out thinking it.

Richard Neville Norman.



LITTLE Ethel, who was shopping with her aunt, listened while the gruff but intelligent shopman remonstrated:

"Madam, I am sure you will not need so much material. You will find five yards quite ample."

As soon as they had left the shop, Ethel

exclaimed indignantly:

"Auntie, I didn't like that man, not one bit! Why, he talked to you just as if he was your husband!''



THE HUMOUR OF THE SITUATION.

Young Dentist (having gagged his victim for a difficult filling, makes an effort to brighten things): By Jove, I wish you could see yourself in a mirror now—you do look a perfect scream!

-The Morning Barrage has a guaranteed circulation of over ten millions—may I inquire what you, with whom concentration must necessarily have become a habit, unavoidable, indestructible, what you intend to turn your attention to next-that is to say, upon what universal but unborn benefit you now propose to concentrate?"

The inventor, who had had the appearance of being asleep during this monologue, opened both eyes to an alarming degree of openness.

"Teht, teht, teht, teht! Upon an automatic annihilator of the verbose in both spoken and written expression.'

"You mean-" commenced the reporter,

LITTLE Willie rushed into the house looking rather dishevelled.

"What's the matter, my dear? fighting again?" said his mother,

"No-yes-that is, Bobby Green knocked me

down and kicked me," replied Willie.

"I thought I told you to speak nicely to any little boy who wanted to fight you, and not get scrimmaging about," said his mother reproachfully.

"Yes," replied Willie, "but I couldn't speak

nicely to Bobby, mother."

"Why not, my dear?" "'Cause he was sitting on my face!" said Willie resentfully.





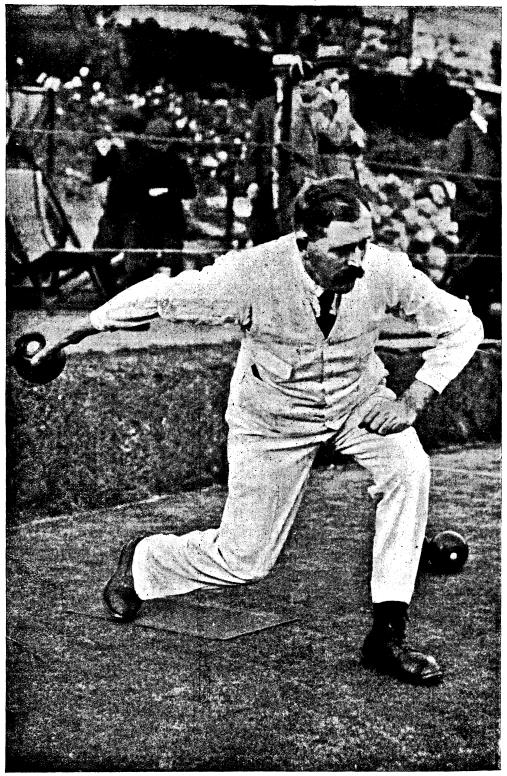
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Espera. Y.,... g 4



MELBOURNE ORCHARD, A PROMINENT PLAYER FROM NEW ZEALAND, PLAYING FOR THE ENGLISH BOWLING ASSOCIATION ON THE HASTINGS GREENS.

Photograph by Sport & General. See article "Bowls and Bowling," on page 356.



"Lyveden was looking fixedly at the return half of a third-class ticket which had been issued at Chipping Norton."

THE RETURN OF THE SPIRIT

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "The Brother of Daphne," "The Courts of Idleness," "Berry and Co.

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

N a quiet, even tone Major Anthony Lyveden was talking.

The pleasant voice went steadily on, now reciting, now commenting, now lending argument a cool dispassionate gravity that forced the ear. Facts were so clearly stated, conclusions so reasonably drawn, points so firmly made—all without a trace of emotion, yet seriously offered in the most conspicuous good faith—that it was almost impossible to realise that the speaker was insensible. But that is the way of brain-fever. . . .

The voice faltered and stopped.

Fervently Miss French prayed that it and the frantic brain might rest from their labours. She wanted desperately to think—to be mistress of her thoughts—but, so long as the voice prevailed, the impression that she was being addressed prevented her, first because it was so vivid, and then because of its importunity.

It was half an hour since Sir Willoughby Sperm's car had rolled down the curling avenue and slipped past the tall lodge-gates.

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If all went well, another fortnight would elapse before the great specialist saw the

patient again.

The silence continuing, Valerie fell to wondering what the two weeks would bring forth. That the fever would presently abate, and the ex-officer be spared his life, seemed highly probable. In fact, Valerie steadily refused to consider that he might weaken and die. What she was eternally asking was what would happen when the engine of the brain, at present running free, was once more engaged with the system it was used Would the coupling break to control. suddenly, and her man go an idiot for life? That she could not believe. Or would the old balance be restored, perfect as ever? There was doubt in the doctors' eyes. Was he, then, to wake stumbling upon that No Man's Land which lies between sense and idiocy? And, if so, how were his trembling steps to be guided aright? Carefully she started to weigh Sir Willoughby's words. . .

"What concerns me most is how to deal with his condition of mind when the fever has run its course. From what I've seen, and from what Heron has told me, I'm satisfied that it is vital that Gramarye should never again enter into his life. That park, or estate, or whatever it is, had taken such an unhealthy hold upon his imagination that he was half-way to insanity. Gramarye is permitted again to take the helm. . . . Well, the ship is half-way across -half-way across those narrow straits which divide reason from lunacy. We've got to take the helm and put it over just as hard as ever we can. You understand? In a word, if, for instance, Major Lyveden were to revisit Gramarye, I think the game would be up. That, of course, can't happen. But it is, in my opinion, of the highest importance, not only that no reference to the place should be made before him, but that we should do our utmost to direct his attention to other matters. We can't expunge the last four months from his memory—I wish we could. Half the asylums in England would be empty if we could do that. But we can avert our eyes from the record, and we can try to avert his."
"Try to avert his." How? Anthony

"Try to avert his." How? Anthony was not an infant, to be beguiled with a rattle when he cried for a blade. And if Gramarye was proposing "again to take the helm," who was to stop her? Had Miss French put that question to Sir Willoughby, he would have replied, "Yourself." For that reason she had not asked him. Again

and again he had insisted that, if the mischief was to be mended at all, it would be at her hand. . . .

There were times when the thought terrified her, when the panic fear of the condemned sat in her eyes. For Valeric knew it was just. It was she who had brought a gallant gentleman to this pass—she who had smashed the exquisite wonder of melody their hearts had danced to—she who had hacked as under the silken bridge of love and sent her lover into the arms of Gramarye.

Gramarye!

Her solitary visit to the park stood out of the girl's memory like a snow-covered peak, vivid and frozen. There was no mercy there. What was far worse, there was an unearthly appeal. Flesh and blood were one thing, but a wild mystery of woodland, the desolate grandeur of a ruined park, the majestic havoc of a proud estate—these were another matter. Looking upon her rival's face, she found it notable. . . . Valerie set her white teeth. That its beauty was a mask hiding some dreadful influence, made her heart faint within her. . . .

Yet, if this fainted, it always revived. Valerie French was well-plucked. If it was ordained that she should fight with Black Magic, with Black Magic she would fight. It was her own fault . . . It is typical of the girl that the fact that she had already paid very heavily never once occurred to her. She had called the tune without asking how much it would cost. That the piper's bill was so long was due to her recklessness.

She did not dispute the account.

For the hundredth time she wondered what line Gramarye would take . . .

It seemed, mercifully, that the fell influence of the estate was not to have things all its own way. While the sick man in his delirium talked much of Gramarye, he spoke of Valerie too-frequently. For hours together, sometimes, he dwelt upon their love. As a rule, he debated with himself whether it was fair to her to let her see him again. (Listening to these heart-searchings, Valerie's heart burned within her) Then he would call his Sealyham and speak to him of the lady, asking if she were not wonderful and a sight for sore eyes. "When she calls you, Patch, aren't you proud of your name? And she took your head in her hands to-day. I saw her. Such sweet, pretty hands. . . . And you looked in her eyes, Patch, and then you licked her nose-very gently, like a good little dog . . . " Then,

again, Anthony's life as a footman was often remembered. Mr. and Mrs. Bumble were gratefully discussed. The Alisons-George especially—figured constantly. Even his life in the Army was sometimes mentioned, and other older days, hard to identify. . . . Gramarye held a good hand -undoubtedly, but there were other cards in the pack.

The door opened noiselessly, and a freshfaced nurse stole into the darkened room. Valerie and she exchanged whispers, and, after another glance at the silent figure upon the bed, the lady of Bell Hammer gave place to the professional and made

her way slowly downstairs.

It was past three o'clock of a sullen March afternoon when Mr. Peter Every dismissed his parade.

The men turned away listlessly, hollow-

Only the little lame engineer said anything at all, and that was an inaudible communication to the three great sailors, whose hearing was gone. Gloomily the latter watched his fingers stumble over their rude translation of Every's last words. . .

"So there you are. Colonel Winchester's gone. Major Lyveden's too ill to ever come Without the authority of one of these two, not another penny can be spent on this estate. Obviously the work's got to stop. I know you don't want wages, but you've got to live. . . . And I've come, as Major Lyveden's friend, to tell vou this before the Law steps in—as it will—and does it more bluntly.

"I know it's rough on you, and I'm devilish sorry. But it's got to be faced. . . And, as I say, I'm commissioned to offer you all your passage to Canada and fifty pounds apiece to tide you over there till

you can get going.

"You chaps think it over.

"I'm staying at The Rose at Girdle, and those who want to accept, report to me there to-morrow morning at ten o'clock. Then I'll tell you the details and fix every-

thing up. Right."

Leaning against the trunk of a fallen beech, Every watched his little audience wade through the weathered fringe of bracken and turn on to the rough brown road that dipped and curled into the heart of Gramarye.

The droop of their shoulders, the heaviness of their steps, the silence in which they went, trumpeted misery. Anything, however,

was better than the dull sightless stares with which the news that their work was over had been received. Every, who was no coward, had been prepared for suspicion, defiance, violence. Instead, his service of the warrant had been accepted without a word. He had no shred of authority, but not the slightest attempt had been made to call his bluff. It had been, in fact, a painful walk-over. The seven labourers seemed to expect a death-blow. When it fell, they met it with the apathy of despair. Every felt as though he were sentencing a bunch of forest ponies to the pits, and the dumb hopelessness of their demeanour plucked at his young heart-strings. . . .

For two or three minutes after the little group had passed out of sight the young man stood motionless. Presently his eyes wandered from the trail up a rude bank, all starred with primroses, through the dim breathless magic of a pinewood on to a peering screen of newborn leaves, palefaced and trembling. After a moment's rest, they turned southward to where the lean brown road went paving a deep corridor, straight, silent, its black walls towering. Distance and gloom lent these a grim symmetry, suggestive of duress; above, a grey ribbon of sky issued a stony comfort, such as prisoners use. . . . With a shiver, Every turned away his head. north the ground fell sharply, and the cut of the road vouchsafed a glimpse of what it led to-woods, woods, woods, swelling, rising, tumbling, bolstering one another up, shouldering one another aside, some with their limbs still bare, others laced with the pale pinafore of spring, all of them dense and orderless, composite regiments of timber, where squire and skipjack stood back to back, and the whelps of both thrust and quarrelled for a place in the bulging ranks.

Every became suddenly conscious of a silence more tense and death-like than he

had ever dreamed of. . . .

Then a wind breathed—miles away . . . He could hear the breath to the north. coming, a mere whimper among the tree-The whimper became a whine. . . . Reaching the pinewood, the note slid into a moan, that rose slowly to a thin wail as the breath fled up the corridor with the towering walls. The wail fell to a sigh. . . .

With straining ears, the man waited for

this to fade. . . . " said a quiet voice.

Every started violently and turned right about.

Ten paces distant, within the shadow of the beechwood, was a big upstanding grey, with ears pricked, vigilant. Square in the saddle sat a girl in a habit of dark blue cloth. So dim was the light that Every could not distinguish her features, but he marked how the eyes burned out of a pale face and noted the glint of copper beneath the hard felt hat.

"Mopping up?" she repeated quietly, but this time there was a silkiness in the tone

that put the man on his guard.

"That's one way of puttin' it," he said lightly. "I'm sort of windin' up the

Company."

"The Garden of Eden Limited," flashed the girl. "History repeats itself." For a moment she hesitated. Then, "Where's Adam?" she said carelessly.

"Done a bunk," said Every, with no idea of what she meant. "Are you a creditor?"

Miss Strongi'th'arm regarded him.
"Either," she said coldly, "you are a liar

or else a fool."

Every stared at her speechless . . . After a moment the girl shrugged her shoulders. Then a riding-boot flashed, and the grey sprang forward.

As she pulled up beside him—

"By what authority do you dismiss these

Every looked up steadily into the angry eyes. Then he took off his hat.

"Forgive me," he said quietly, "but by

what authority do you ask?"

For a second he thought she would strike him. The cold fury of the pale peaked face, the haughty set of the lips, the blaze of the great brown eyes, heralded violence . . .

Every never moved.

With a sudden movement Andrè turned her head to stare into the distance. At

length---

"I've lost all I had in this estate—this venture . . . and a lot that—that wasn't mine," she said slowly. "Is that good enough?"

Before the weariness of her tone, Every's

resentment went down with a rush.

"I'm most awfully sorry," he said gently.
"I'd no idea of this. I don't think anyone has. Of course, if I'd known for a moment that you were—er—interested, I shouldn't have dreamed of moving in the matter without your consent." He hesitated. Then:
"But surely you can recover something. I mean, the place can be sold, and I'm sure the solicitors would see to it that you—"

Andrè gave a dry laugh.

"I hardly think they'd allow my claim," she said shortly.

Every swallowed before replying.

"You could try," he said desperately.
"Fool," said the girl contemptuously.
"It's not a question of money. It's a question of men." And with that she fell to whistling under her breath.

Every decided that she was mad.

"I'm afraid I don't understand," he said stiffly. "What I'm doing, I'm doing with the approval of Mr. Plowman, solicitor to Colonel Winchester—he's the owner of this park: and, if you apply——"

"Yes, I know that," said Andrè quietly. But for this park, I should be Mrs.

Winchester."

The scales fell from Every's eyes. The picture of the giant, of whom Plowman had told him, pacing a madman's cage, rose up before him, and a great wave of pity for his companion swept into his heart. It occurred to him suddenly that, but for the grace of God, Valerie French would stand by this strange girl's side . . .

"Think you understand, don't you?" sneered Andre. She laughed shortly.

You've got a lot to learn yet. First of all, my friend, this isn't a park. It's a temple. The very place you're standing on is holy ground. And those clowns you're sacking are priests—sworn to moil and toil for Gramarye until she's sucked the brains out of their heads. And you're spoiling her game . . . I should go carefully if I were you, my friend. And if you get safe out of her to-day, I shouldn't come back—if you can help it . . . I don't want to be rude, but she's brought down bigger game than you—far bigger . . And they were her favourites."

" I'm not afraid," said Every

"" Of course you aren't. If you were, you'd be safe. If Samson had feared Delilah, he wouldn't have lost his eyes." She broke off and shrugged her shoulders. Then: "And now, if you're satisfied with my authority to question you, what's yours for dismissing these men?"

"I have none," said Every. "But the

chap who was here—Lyveden——"

"Yes?" breathed Andre.

"Well, he's too ill to——"
With a moan, the girl dropped the reins, flung back her head, and clapped her hands

to her temples.

"I knew it," she wailed, "I knew it! First Richard Winchester, and then Anthony ... my darling ... Anthony Lyveden ..."

Every stood spellbound. The tragedy had taken a new—a frightful turn. Valerie — trustful, unsuspecting Valerie — was hideously involved. He wondered if Lyveden delirious would babble of this strange girl. If he did. . . And when he recovered-what then?

Hurriedly he reviewed the position.

Under Dr. Heron's direction, Lyveden had been drugged here, at Gramarye, and brought to Bell Hammer. The whole object of his removal was to smash his infatuation for Gramarye, so that he might feel free to worship Valerie. On their joint love the whole thing was founded. Everything had been arranged on that basis. And now if Lyveden had been consulted, perhaps he would not have come—not because of Gramarye, but because of a girl—a girl with auburn hair . . .

"Where is he?"

The words cut his reflections with a clean slash.

" Who?"

Andrè Strongi'th'arm's eyes narrowed.

"The high priest," she said.

"D'you mean Major Lyveden?"

" I do."

Every paled. Whatever might be the other's standing, with him Valerie came first. It might be rough on the girl, but that could not be helped, and would eventually, he supposed, be mended. One thing was plain. Not at any price must she go to Bell Hammer.

"I'm afraid I'm not at liberty to tell

you."
"Why?"

"If you're thinking of visiting him, I assure you---"

"I wish to know where Maior Lyveden

Every drew himself up.

"I'm very sorry," he said, "but until I've seen those in charge of him and have their permission to tell you-

"I have a right to know."

Every winced. Then he looked up

"As Colonel Winchester's fiancée?" he

Andrè caught her breath. Then she bowed her head.

"As a most miserable woman," she said brokenly. "Somewhere it says, 'From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.' . . . Well, it's as one of those outcasts . . . one of those hopeless double bankrupts----"

"Stop!" cried Every, aghast. "Stop! I don't want to hear. . . . Listen. I'll be at Girdle till Friday. That day I'll leave a note for you at the inn, with Lyveden's address inside."

He had, I suppose, some vague idea of getting to Hampshire before her.

For a second the girl stared at him with

knitted brows. Then— "You appear," she said coldly, "to be not only a fool, but a poisonous fool. After all, if you won't tell me, I suppose there are other ways. . . ." She picked up the reins. "And so you're a friend of Major Lyveden's ? To tell you the truth, I shouldn't have

thought he'd 've had much use for you." With her words, the hunter moved

forward. .

Dazedly Every watched the two pass at a walk into the gloomy corridor and dwindle slowly to a mere blur of blue and grey under the shadow of the towering walls. At last distance and dusk swallowed them, and he could see them no more.

By the evening of the following Thursday the young man's work was done, and by ten o'clock on Friday morning his car had left Girdle and was flying up Gallowstree

Provision had been made for the men; the horses in the stables at Gramarye had been disposed of. He had only come, with Valerie's approval, out of sheer pity for helpless men and beasts. His unexpected interview with Andrè Strongi'th'arm worried him sorely. He was convinced that between her and Anthony there had been a serious affair. Himself devoted to Valerie, this made him furious; remembering her devotion to Lyveden, it scared him. If, after all that had happened, Valerie was to find, not only that her cake was dough, but that it was not even her cake, but another's, Every verily believed the shock would send her out of her mind. The mortification alone would be enough to unhinge any woman. . . .

The sight of Anthony's cottage at the edge of the park reminded him of his proposal to recover his tobacco-pouch. He had laid it down on the tree-trunk whilst he was addressing the men that memorable Monday

afternoon.

Not daring, for fear of thieves, to leave the car upon the highway, he drove her gently on to the wasted track. Even then he was not comfortable, for she could be seen from the road. After a moment's hesitation, he decided to risk it. He could not drive to the spot, for from here, for a furlong or so, the road was in ribbons. They seemed to have been hauling timber. The only thing to do was to be as quick as he could and hope for the best. Going fast, he should be back

again in twenty minutes. . .

There had blown a gale in the night, and Every was not surprised to find one of the tall dark pillars of the gigantic corridor fallen across the lean brown road. It was his haste in surmounting this obstacle that was responsible for the simple but painful fracture of his left leg. The trunk was slippery, and he had jumped untimely to save a fall. Two stout boughs had been waiting, and the rest was easy. . . .

Now, Peter Every was, as we know, no coward; but when, lying there, he reflected that, thanks to his efforts, the estate was now deserted, he became extremely uneasy. And presently, when he remembered Miss Strongi'th'arm's words, he broke into a cold

sweat.

"If you get safe out of her to-day, I shouldn't come back—if you can help it."

"I'm told," said Anthony weakly, "that I'm at Bell Hammer."

Lady Touchstone smiled and nodded.

"That's right," she said gently. "And Valerie should be here to welcome you, but she's asleep. So you must make shift with me."

The truth was, Valerie French had broken down. The strain of waiting and watching for the hour for which she longed, yet dreaded, had proved too much. Only the day before she had fainted suddenly, and, honestly glad of an excuse, the local doctor had ordered her to bed forthwith. Valerie had obeyed dumbly. She knew that she had come to the end of her tether, and so to that of her wit; and since, to deal at all hopefully with Anthony's return to consciousness, her understanding must be on tiptoe, she knew that she was better away. If the change was to come before she was fit for duty, it could not be helped. In her present condition she was, she felt, worse than useless.

Two hours later Anthony had tried to sit up, failed, looked dazedly about him, and, when the fresh-faced nurse stole to his side, asked first for some water and then, shakily, to be told where he was. He had promised, in return for the answer, to ask no more questions, but to go quietly to sleep. This promise he had immediately broken by asking anxiously for news of his dog. Learning that Patch was below, and well and

happy, he had spoken no more. After eighteen hours he had awaked, greatly refreshed, to find himself the cynosure of three pairs of eyes. These were all kindly and full of cheer. Two pairs were contributed respectively by the nurse and Lady Touchstone, while the third was set in the face of an overgrown cherub, who smelt agreeably of Harris tweed and was gently furbishing his pince-nez with an enormous handkerchief.

"This," continued Lady Touchstone, "is Dr. Gilpin." The cherub grinned reassuringly. "He's extremely pleased with you, and, when you're better, I think you'll return the compliment."

"I've been ill," said the patient stupidly.

The cherub nodded.

"Gave us quite a turn once or twice," he said, smiling. "But you're all right now. And if you'll promise to obey orders, I'll have you out of bed in a fortnight."

Anthony's face fell. Then-

"I'm in your hands, sir," he said. "And I'm very, very grateful for all you've done." His eyes turned to Lady Touchstone. "And you. I don't understand anything yet," he

added plaintively.

"Good," said the doctor. "Now we know where we are." He took out his watch. "If you would like it, you and your hostess can have a little chat—for ten minutes only—just to clear matters up. Then Nurse Ford will take over."

"Please," said Anthony.

A moment later the two were alone.

"I don't know how I come to be here," said the patient slowly, "but I'm afraid it must have been a terrible inconvenience and—and expense. You know I've no money."

Subduing an inclination to burst into

tears—

"On the contrary," said Lady Touchstone, "you're quite respectably off. Since you've been ill, you've come into money—more than enough to pay for everything. So don't let that worry you."

She felt that it was not the moment to tell him that he was virtually a millionaire.

For a moment the man did not speak.

"How did I get here?" he said.

"You may well ask," was the reply. "If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I wouldn't have believed it possible for George Alison to lift a man of your inches and carry him single-handed right from the front door. I know he rowed for Cambridge, but, all the same, it was the act of a fool. And I told

him so. Of course, he only grinned. You know that inane, irresistible grin of his when he's done something he knows is——"

"George Alison?" said Anthony.
"George Alison? How on earth——" He stopped short and started up on an elbow.
"What month is it?"

"D'you mean to say I've lain here in this house for six months?"

The woman's heart leaped into her mouth.

"And why not?" she said quietly. "I know a case of a man who lay unconscious for over two years—the result of a fall, hunting. And when he came to——"

She stopped to peer at the patient.

Then she rang for the nurse—instantly.

Anthony had fainted.

Thus fell that formidable position upon whose delicate reduction all the science of physic, the love of women, the wisdom of friends, had been feverishly concentrated by day and night for nearly three weeks.

Chance and a woman's instinct had done the trick. As by a miracle the hopeless had come to pass. The helm had been put hard over, and the craft had answered as sweetly as any swish - tailed circus nag. Gramarye and all her works, if not forgotten, had in the twinkling of an eve become the fabric of a dream mere relics of a fantastic age for a sane mind to marvel at.

For two or three days after the momentous interview Anthony said very little. When he had again seen

Lady Touchstone, and the two—blind leading the blind—had satisfactorily fixed the very date of his collapse, George Alison was sent for. Carefully schooled, the latter spent a fruitful five minutes by the sick



"'All our happiness depends upon my remembering, and—it's coming back....'
His voice faded, and in an instant he was deep in thought.... Valerie's heart stood still. Then she threw back her head and began to sing."

"April," said Lady Touchstone. "And now lie down again, there's a dear boy. . . . And why shouldn't George Alison have——"

"But if it's April— Good God!" he cried hoarsely, raising a trembling hand.

man's side. Upon the third day came Valerie. . . .

The girl was exalted. Gratitude had set the crown upon the glory of her array. No one had ever seen her look so beautiful. Out of the furnace the fine gold had come refined, dazzling.

My gross pen cannot picture her.

The dark lustre of her hair, the exquisite curve of her lips, her pride of carriage, were things for sonnets. Her small firm hands, the white column of her neck, the colour springing in her cheeks, made three sweet wonders. The style of her was superb. Tall, straight, clean-limbed, her figure remembered graces of a younger age. The simple flowered-silk dress looked as though all who put it on must go in elegance. Silk and satin covered her precious feet. A nosegay of violets, brooched to her gown, echoed the hue, but not the magic of her eyes. Had the poor flowers been blowing still upon their mother bank, all wet with dew, and had a star stooped to prove how sweet they smelled, then, sirs, they should have rendered more faithfully my lady's eyes.

Anthony had wondered when she would

come. . . .

A breath of perfume, a swift whisper, the rustle of silk—and there was Valerie by his side.

"Oh, Valerie!"

Miss French fell upon her knees.

Very gently Lyveden put her hand to his lips. Then he turned away his head and began to cry.

With a bursting heart, Valerie almost

gathered him in her arms.

"D'you love me, Anthony?"

By way of answer he just clung to her.

At length—

"I'm—I'm sorry, my sweet. . . . It's —I think it's just because . . . I love you so much." With an effort he mastered his lips. "And I'm so very sorry, dear, I kissed you like that—the day I went down. I dreamed about it. I dreamed you came to me, and I apologised." With her heart in her mouth, Valerie smoothed his brow. "And you were—so very sweet. You said "—he hesitated—"you spoke so very handsomely."

" I'm so glad, darling."

"And, oh, Valerie"—he was himself again now—"I've had such a wonderful dream. I've been waiting for you, my darling, before I spoke of it."

"What did you dream, lad?"

"I dreamed that I'd left the Bumbles-

I had given notice, you know—and gone, in answer to an advertisement, to a place in the Cotswolds. It's all so real, so vivid, that it's almost impossible to appreciate that it's all a dream. I can remember every detail of the journey—I had Patch with me—down to the faces of my fellow-passengers. A woman with a baby got out at Oxford and left a parcel behind. And I ran after her with it. I can see her scared face now, poor soul, when I touched her on the shoulder . . ."

The story of the last four months came pelting. Anthony fairly opened his heart. At first, listening to the bare truth told with the confident naiveté of disbelief, Valerie felt as though she were cheating the blind. After a little, this sense of shabbiness was suddenly supplanted by a perfect torment of apprehension lest Anthony should detect her hypocrisy. Presently, before her breathless interest in the narrative, the girl's uneasiness slipped unremarked away, and, when the door opened and the gentle nurse appeared to part them, she was following the ingenuous recital with unaffected eagerness.

Valerie nodded her acquiescence in the unspoken order, and the nurse withdrew. As the former rose to her feet—

"Ah, must you go, my lady?"
"Till this evening, dear lad."
Anthony sighed fretfully.

"And I've wasted all our precious time with my old dream. I've hardly spoken of you, and there's so much I want to know."

"We've plenty of time, darling. Think of it. Once we never knew when—if, even, we should ever see one another again. Now . . . Oh, Anthony, we're very rich."

"I am," said Anthony, smiling. "And when you say you are—why, then I feel like a king."

Valerie flung up her head. An instant,

and she was singing.

"If I were a queen,
What would I do?
I'd make you a king
And I'd wait upon you—
If I were a queen."

Never melody knew such tenderness. Poor Anthony could not trust himself to

speak. . . .

Valerie stooped and laid a soft cheek against his. Then she pressed his hand to her lips.

The next moment she was gone.

When Sir Willoughby Sperm learned of his patient's progress, he struck the words "Major Lyveden" out of his diary. The action cost him exactly one hundred guineas, and the secretary by his side bit her lip. To keep that Saturday free for his visit to Hampshire, she had refused nine appointments. But, if he was a bad business man, Sperm was a good doctor. Anthony was out of the wood. Very well. Considering the nature of the peril with which the wood had been quick, the less the fugitive saw of strange doctors, the better for him. insist upon the gravity of his late disorder was most undesirable. Besides, if at this juncture a specialist's visit to Bell Hammer could serve any useful purpose, Heron was the man to pay it. It was he who had walked and talked with Lyveden when the latter's brain had been sick. So he alone of the doctors could compare Philip drunk with Philip sober. Happily no such comparison was necessary. Had it been vital, it could not have been made. For the patient to renew the acquaintance of the artist he had met at Gramarye—and that in the person of a distinguished brain specialist—would hardly have conduced to his health of mind. Indeed, from the moment that Anthony had reached Bell Hammer in safety, so far as the inmates of that house were concerned, the very name of Dr. Heron was, by his own advice, religiously forgotten as though the man had never been. It was natural, however, that one who had done so much to arrest the disorder should care to hear how Anthony was faring. mutual arrangement the cherubic Dr. Gilpin wrote to the former faithfully three times a week.

Similar, though less frequent, reports were regularly rendered to Mr. Justice Molehill.

One of these latter I will set out, for it was a wise man that wrote it, and the matter is to the point. I would, sirs, that I could show you the handwriting, so fine and easy to read.

Bell Hammer, nr. Brooch, Hants. April 11th, 1921.

Dear Sir Giles,

Major Lyveden continues mercifully to make

good progress.

I saw him myself yesterday for the first time, and must make haste to confess that I am overjoyed. When I say this, you will remember that he is not only the stranger whom we are helping to the acquisition of a great fortune, but the man whom my niece is delighting to honour. Lyveden is a man of great personal charm and fine character, and I am sure that he will administer his heritage wisely and faithfully, and that he will make Valerie a proud and happy woman. I am glad to say, too, that your memory of his appearance is as true as your judgment. In short, he is a splendid specimen of manhood.

There is, of course, no doubt at all that he is our man, i.e. the only nephew of the late Jonathan Roach. Boldly advancing out of my province, I begged leave to ask him a question or two, to which the most exacting of opponents could not in decency have objected. His replies made me ashamed of the doubts which I never—even officially—harboured.

Of the nature of his brain trouble and of his escape I have already told you. Enough that that wondrous bridge which an Omnipotent Providence threw across the river, while we stood gaping upon the other bank, stands fixed as any rock. As often as he will revisit Gramarye, the patient treads it with a firm, confident step. I do not matter—besides, I must soon return to Rome—but, by my advice, Valerie and those who are and are to be about him are schooling themselves to use this same strange bridge. Future safety, I contend, lies in making it a thoroughfare. So only approached, Gramarye will indeed become "such stuff as dreams are made on," and the four months he spent there be "rounded with a sleep "for ever.

I have told Major Lyveden the story of the lost will, and of your close interest, to which alone he owes his fortune. His great desire is to thank you personally. My own remissness he forgave in undeservedly generous terms.

I expect to leave for Italy early next week, and while I shall write again before that, I shall hope, if you are then in London, to visit you on my way.

Believe me,

Yours very truly, John Forest.

The prelate was not the man to exaggerate. Anthony's recovery went on amain. His state of independence had, as we know, been broached by Lady Touchstone: it was becoming that the true extent of his fortune should be disclosed by Monseigneur Forest himself.

The sick man received the news with some emotion.

He felt as though suddenly a wand had been set in his hand—a wand beneath whose

careless touch the shifting flux of wishes must set and crystallise. For more than eighteen months he had "thought in pennies." Henceforth it would be unnecessary to think at all. The spectre of Ways and Means was laid for ever. Often, when his purse had been lightest-when he had been forced to eat sparingly of the cheapest food-he had been used to remember an old fragment of Virgil that he had learned as a boy—Forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit. Times without number he had been glad of the tag. And now it had served its turn. . . . Looking back upon his penury, he could not wish that he had been spared those lean, ill-favoured days. And when, because of these, Monseigneur Forest reviled himself, Lyveden refused to listen, declaring that the experience had been invaluable, and must surely stand the camel in good stead when the time came for him to negotiate the needle's eye. For a prelate to withstand such a contention was more than difficult. ... Yet if the patient spoke to the point, it was by accident. His thoughts were elsewhere. Childishly excited, he was wanting to use his wand. Ridiculously enough, his romping brain could not furnish a wish to be converted... . Suddenly an idea came to him. His dog, his little faithful dog, had gone in need of a collar for over nine months. . . .

Mercifully the terrier was dumb. Otherwise the prelate's "Bridge of Providence" must have returned unto the air whence it came. As it was, the dog was brought to the sick-room twice every day. The tenderness with which he treated Anthony was wonderful to see. Naturally boisterous, the efforts with which he mastered the frenzy these interviews provoked, were manifest. He knew that Lyveden had been dangerously He knew that he was mending. twofold consideration set the flame of his devotion flaring. Yet, when he visited his master, the jet must be reduced to a pilot. . . . The marvel is the dog did not burst. Instead, placed within reach, he would set a quivering foot upon the bed and lick the caressing hand with a touch that would not have broken a bubble. Presently, whimpering with excitement, he would post about the chamber, seeking an object to present to his Of such, the choice which the room afforded was straitly limited, and when for the second time he had selected one of the knobs of a chest of drawers, endeavour-

ing to detach this by dint of biting it off,

the fresh-faced nurse was advised of his

intention, and a log of wood was procured to be kept in a corner. Thereafter twice a day the billet was brought reverently to the bedside

Poor Patch! It was the best his dull wit could devise.

Oh, Patch, could you but see how idle and clumsy is your act, you would hang your small head. Could you perceive the vanity of repetition, your bright brown eyes would fill with tears. Could you be told whence comes the gift which you give Anthony, your little tail would be clapped between your legs. . . . Yet have I heard tell of a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; of altar steps worn thin by the observance of the same offices; of spikenard that might have been sold and given to the poor. . . .

Sirs, this poor scrap of a dog errs in good

company.

The April days slipped by, smiling, or shrill, or tearful, as the mood took them.

A letter which Valerie had received from Peter Every, written and posted at Girdle upon the last day of March, had set her mind at rest about Anthony's stewardship of Gramarye. Apart from the action of the Law, that book had been closed as gently and firmly as mortal man could close it. By the removal of the steward, neither men nor beasts engaged there had been left one penny the worse. The former, indeed, were well out of a bad business. Incidentally, they would very soon be well out of Anthony's way. Never had money been so advantageously spent. Valerie had written to Every a letter of heartfelt thanks.

By the courtesy of the Bumbles, their chauffeur came to Bell Hammer two or three times a week. He did not always see his late colleague, but Alison was no fool, and points were constantly arising upon which Valerie was glad of his advice. It was he who went through Anthony's wardrobe with the utmost care, saying which of the garments he had seen before and which had been acquired since their owner's departure from Hawthorne. The latter were carefully destroyed. Lyveden's few personal effects were subjected to a similar scrutiny and partial destruction. Nothing was left to chance. If George was uncertain, Betty and Anne were sent for. If no one could be sure, whatever it was, the article in question went to the furnace. Never was the high-road of convalescence more faithfully reconnoitred.

Less actively, Lady Touchstone and Forest contributed according to their means. These were substantial. The electric personality of the one, the gentle charm of the other, were better than physic. The one stimulated; the other composed. A twinkling hour of Lady Touchstone's company was like a glass of champagne. A talk with the Monseigneur rivalled the quality of old Madeira. Wisely administered, the wine built up the wasted tissues of the mind. The latter's digestion being sound, Lyveden throve upon the diet. His brain put on weight daily.

So far as his body was concerned, no one had any anxiety at all. Anthony's fine constitution and the open-air life which he had led at Gramarye stood him in splendid stead. So much so, that when, upon St. George's Day, Patch came trotting with a red rose in his mouth, he found the bed empty and his master sitting cheerfully upon a sofa before the fuss and worry of a bright wood fire. It was clear that a new era had begun. Patch dropped the rose and fairly hurled himself at a small log lying conveniently in a corner beside an old prie-Dieu.

A mischievous look came into Valerie's

"You haven't heard a word," she said, bubbling, "of what I've been saying. You know you haven't."

Anthony laughed guiltily.

"Yes, I have," he protested. "You were saying you'd half a mind to give up having hydrangeas and—and—er—not have them at all," he concluded lamely.

Valerie uttered a little crow of triumph.

"Scandalous," she said. "Simply scandalous. It's no good pretending. I know perfectly well what you were thinking about. You were thinking of Gramarye. That old dream of yours . . . "

Mark, sirs, how the mighty may fall and how familiarity may breed contempt. Gramarye had lost her sting. Spoiled of her puissance, she had sunk to the level of "Boney"—fare for the ears of children,

food for a jest.

"No, I wasn't," said Anthony, smiling. "At least, not directly. I was thinking of an argument the Monseigneur put up about my dream."
." What did he say?"

"Well, his contention was this. You know, if, for instance, a bell rings when you're asleep and dreaming, as likely as not the noise is introduced—not necessarily in the same form—into your dream, isn't it? Very well. That shows the senses are work-The message arrives distorted, but it

arrives. Well, he said that in his opinion practically everything that came to pass in my dream was originally suggested by some outside influence. Water being poured into a basin suggests a brook. A sewing-machine becomes a train. The hiss of a burning log escaping steam. So much for the ears. Now for the eyes. A maid helps the nurse to move a sofa—I see timber being hauled. doctor shakes his thermometer, and there's Winchester wielding an axe . . . It's a pretty theory, and the more you study it, the sounder it seems." He crossed his legs and started to fill a pipe. "All the same, I must have a fertile imagination. I think I always had. As a child I was left alone a great deal, and I fancy that helped."

It was a lazy Sunday morning—the fourth in the month of May. John Forest had been gone a month, and Lady Touchstone was properly at church. Greenwich would have told you that it was ten o'clock, and the gorgeous tapestry of Summer was still wrought with the brilliant embroidery of a heavy dew. Lawns, flower-borders, and stiff box charactery sparkled and shone in the hot sunshine. The sky was cloudless: a haze kept to itself the distant promise of the park: there was no wind. The sleepy hum of insects, a rare contented melody, tilted the hat of Silence over that watchman's eyes. The wandering scent of hawthorns offered the faultless day a precious buttonhole.

Sitting easily among the cushions of a teakwood chair, Anthony let his eyes ramble luxuriously over the prospect. In a chaise longue by his side Valerie was engaged in the desultory composition of a letter to her uncle in Rome. Stretched blinking upon the warm flags, Patch watched the two vigilantly for any sign of movement.

Did I ever have a red-haired nurse?" said Anthony suddenly.

Valerie shook her head.

"No," she said. "You had the same two

all the time. Why?"

"I dreamed of a red-haired girl." Valerie "Andrè her name was. sat very still. met her first in the road . . . I remember she knew me. She'd been hunting and looked like a Bacchanal. She turned up again later on—one night. I was just going to bed." 'I wonder He frowned at the recollection. I didn't chatter about that. I was worried to blazes. . . .

"That—that's the worst of dreams," said Valerie slowly. "You're impotent."

With a shock she realised that she had written ANDRE in capitals in the middle of her letter, and, below it again, BAC-CHANAL. Casually she scratched out the words till her pen ploughed up the sodden paper.

"It's a wretched feeling," said Anthony.
"I dreamt she—cared for me. And I—I

drove off. There must have been a car leaving Bell Hammer just then. I can hear her changing the gears now." He passed a hard over his eyes. "I can't remember any more, except that Winchester was shouting. . . ."

For a long moment the two sat very still. Then Valerie scrambled to her

" For a second the terrier listened. The next moment he was almost beating himself against the woodwork."

never got there. She had to tell me right out. . . Oh, Valerie, it was awful."

Miss French felt as though her heart had stopped beating. She could have screamed to Anthony to go on. Instead—

"Poor old chap," she said gently.

She had her reward.

"When she saw there was nothing doing, she went.... And then Winchester appeared with Patch, as I was putting her into her car. I remember he called her 'Andre'—that's how I knew her name.... And then he cursed me, because she was his fiancée, and she fairly tore him up. Then she chucked down his ring and

feet and put her head on one side. Her eyes were just dancing.

"You and your red-haired sirens," she said reproachfully. "And now come along,

and I'll pick you a buttonhole."

The cloud poor Peter Every had found so menacing had discharged rain of pure gold. Love had emerged from the shower refreshed, glistening. The two could not know that, while they passed down the steps into the sunlit flower-garden, a girl with auburn hair was pushing a frantic three-year-old through the Scotch mist of Donegal, and wondering at every bank whether she would have the good fortune to break her neck.

Still, though their rain be golden, clouds beget shadows. If Lyveden responded to Valerie's invitation, he did not rise to her mood. The throwback to Gramarye had set him thinking. . . .

there was something wrong. I mean, we were at variance."

With difficulty the girl repressed a shiver. For a while she had hourly dreaded an



"Valerie got upon her feet. 'What is it, Patch?' she said. 'He isn't here yet.'"

His serious tone, however, made her look up. The bloom was spared "Yes."

"When I went down-in November-

allusion to the grim episode. Then, when the weeks went by and none was made, she began, at first feebly, to hope that it was buried. Gradually the hope had swelled into belief. Lately she had made sure that upon the first day, when Anthony had wept in her arms, he and she had been treading upon its grave. And now here it was—like a river full in their path, a swift-flowing treacherous stream which they must ford together. She would have given anything for a moment to collect her thoughts, but Anthony had started across. Already he was up to his knees. . . .

To be frank, she was in a tight place. The issues she had to deal with were clogged. Her treatment of them was to be governed by ruthless premises. Finally, if she made a false step, her fortunes and those of Anthony would be again in the melting-pot.

For an instant her brain zig-zagged. The

next moment she had it in hand.

"Yes," she said slowly, "we were. I hoped you'd forgotten. You see, I'm very much ashamed. And, when my eyes were opened, I was just terrified. I felt as if I'd committed murder."

As she spoke, her brain fairly flashed through the rules which must govern this

taik.

Everything hinged upon one mighty postulate—that Anthony had collapsed precisely at one-fifteen upon the 16th of November. He had, of course, done nothing of the sort. But that did not matter.

From that hour, for four months and a half, he had lain in a trance. This was the second article, which except Anthony

believed, he could not be saved.

Anthony's memory, however, was a faithful servant—not to be tampered with. To reconcile the servant's report with the articles of his faith, a third tenet became essential. This was that what Anthony remembered was the burthen of a dream.

There go the governing principles.

Now for the issues.

Her sudden—perhaps excusable—jealousy of Anne Alison, her barbarous dismissal of Anthony, her quite inexcusable failure to give any reason for such treatment, her subsequent enlightenment by Anne herself—there is the skeleton whose dry bones he and she are to pick over—a gruesome business which has already been dispatched... upon the twentieth day of February, gentlemen, up in the Cotswold Hills. They both remember it perfectly. Yet Valerie must forget it, while Anthony must think it was a dream ... must ...

Neither by word nor look must Valerie suggest that the highly delicate ground she knows so well has ever been broken before.

Think, sirs, what a slip on her part will do.

It will plainly knock the three precious articles aforementioned into a cocked hat. Thence they will be retrieved to be turned against her—used to her condemnation by Anthony frantic. As for their love, the fragments of this that remain will not be worth taking up. . . .

Anthony passed a hand across his fore-

head.

"Shall I tell you what I dreamed?"

"Yes," said Valerie.

"I dreamed that you came to me to make it up. And I was afraid. I tried to keep off the subject. I'd come such an awful cropper that I didn't want any more falls. But you would have it out. . . And you said—don't laugh—that you'd turned me down because of Anne Alison." He stopped still and looked at her. "What was the real reason?"

Leaning her back against a green box wall, Valerie moistened her lips. Then—

"It's perfectly true," she said quietly.

Anthony stared. "What's true?"

"Listen. You remember the meet at Saddle Tree Cross?"

/" Yes."

"When we spoke of my 'window,' and you said the spot meant so much to you that you couldn't keep away?"

Anthony nodded.

"D'you remember I said I was going away the next day?"

" Perfectly."

"It fell through, and I didn't go. There wasn't time to tell you, so I went—to the 'window.'" Anthony started. "That's right. I found you there with Anne Alison."

" But, Valerie--"

"I know, I know. Anne told me, after you'd gone—down." The slip she had so nearly made set the girl sweating—literally. "I was mad, Anthony, mad," she panted. "I couldn't think straight. I nearly jumped over the clift. I think the shock sent me blind. I'd always grudged her being so much with you. I want you to know the truth. She was always at the back of my mind. And when I saw you together—there, at our window . . ." She buried her face in her hands. "I know it was vile of me, dear. You see what I'm like. And if, now that you know, you'd like to go to a hotel—"

"But, Valerie, why didn't you give me a

chance?"

"I was mad," she wailed, "mad! I loved you so wildly, Anthony, that I was stunned. And, in spite of it all, I loved you just as much. And that made me so furious, I could have torn my hair. I wanted to hurt you cruelly, and when I did, I bruised my own heart.

"I was too proud. You'd dared to touch my pride "-she laughed hysterically-"my precious, sacred pride-my Ark of the Covenant. D'you remember how Uzzah died because he touched the Ark? Well, you had to die. . . . And now "-she spread out her arms pathetically-"it's the pride that's dead, Anthony. Dead . . . dried up . . . shrivelled. . . . And I know what I'm worth."

She stopped.

Out of the neighbouring silence floated the comfortable note of a wood-pigeon. Clear of the shadow of the green box wall two butterflies flitted and whirled in the hot sunshine, while a fat bumble-bee hummed with excitement before the promise of a tall blue flag.

With his face in his hands, Anthony

never moved.

"And that's all I've got to say. When I found I was wrong-well, I didn't know there was such agony in this world. . . . I deserved it, I know. Don't think I'm complaining. I deserve anything. But . . . if tears count, then I've paid-some of the score. . . .

The man's hands were quivering.

Looking upon him, Valerie could see that

he was gazing between his fingers.

"I'm afraid to speak," he said uncer-His voice was trembling with excitement. "I'm afraid to go on. Don't think I haven't forgiven you. I have, I did—oh, ages ago. But . . . we're skating on terribly thin ice-terribly thin. We must go frightfully carefully, You've no idea how carefully.' Valerie. The girl stared at him. This was uncannyas if he could read her thoughts. He went on breathlessly. "My dream, dear. This is what happened in my dream. . . . You reproached yourself in just the same handsome way. You used the same phrases." Valerie started. then—after all—something went wrong. . . . What it was, I don't know. I can't remember. And that's the trouble. I can't remember what happened. But it's been the same so far, and then-something went wrong. . . . '

Valerie stood paralysed. If Anthony was afraid to continue, she was terrified.

With an ungracious buzz the fat bee emerged clumsily from the tall blue flag and sailed noisily out of earshot. The sudden snap of jaws suggested that Patch, who was waiting patiently for the walk to proceed, forgave the flies no trespasses.

"You can't understand, dear. But you must take my word for it. I've trodden this way before. And presently—very soon now-there's a snare-a hole in the road. And if we go in, Valerie, it's—it's all up. I know it. It happened in my dream . . . And I'm afraid to go on.'

The tremulous misery of his tone wrung

the girl's heart.

Instinctively she stretched out a hand.

Anthony recoiled with a cry.

"Don't! Don't touch me! I remember. You took my arm." Head back, he clawed at his temples. "That's right. And we started to walk. We had been standing. We started to walk back towards the cottage. And I felt absurdly happy-all of a sudden . . . That was just before the end. And then . . . Oh, if I could only remember. . . .

The agony of desire in his tone seared Valerie's brain into action. With a shock she realised that there she was standing like a dolt, quietly watching Lyveden cudgelling his brains for the password back to Insanity. Any second he might stumble upon it. For once, mercifully, his memory was sluggish-would not respond. And there he was flogging it, to extract that hideous fatal delusion that he was pledged to Gramarye. . . .

Frantically she sought for a distraction. Her brain, however, was away, with the bit in its teeth. She could do nothing with it. The only thing she could think of was that dreadful pass which Anthony was straining every nerve to recall. This rose up vivid. His reference to the kiss he had given her-her soft reply-the way he had taken her in his arms—then that mischievous breeze that had come whispering out of the silence, remindful, suggestive—the start he had given at its touch—the hoarse cry—the terrible light in his eyes. . . .

Anthony gave a great shout.

"I know," he panted jubilantly. "I know. . . . It's coming back, darling, it's coming back-bit by bit. Then I spoke of that kiss. I said how sorry I was and asked your forgiveness. And you said-" He stopped suddenly and clapped a hand over his mouth. After a moment, "'Sh," he said shakily. "I mustn't repeat your words. That'd be moving. And we mustn't move, Valerie. We're just at the edge of the pit. We mustn't move an inch till I can see where it is. Don't be frightened, dear. It's all right. All our happiness depends upon my remembering, and—it's coming back. . . ."

His voice faded, and in an instant he was

deep in thought.

Eyes narrowed, his under-lip caught between his teeth, he stared fixedly ahead, making a supreme effort—plainly.

Valerie stood spellbound.

A pompous hum argued that the fat bee

had decided to revisit the vicinity.

Far in the distance there was a movement—leaves shaken of the wind. A breeze was passing. The timber of the park murmured the news faintly. . . . With a sigh the tall elms of the avenue confirmed the park's report. A breeze was passing... coming... a little mischievous breeze. . . .

For one long moment Valerie's heart stood

still.

Then she threw back her head and began to sing.

"Where the bee sucks, there suck I: In a cowslip's bell I lie . . ."

Anthony stared at her open-mouthed. Her throat felt as though it had steel bands about it. She just smiled and sang on.

"There I couch when owls do cry,

When owls do cry, When owls do cry. . . . "

The leaves of the lime-trees beyond the green box wall were trembling—she could see them—beginning to bob up and down. The boughs themselves were beginning to sway elastically. Valerie sang like a book.

"On a bat's back do I fly,
After sunset, merrily, merrily,
After sunset, merrily...."

The lime-trees had stopped trembling. The breeze had passed. . . . An exultant

note swept into the melody.

" Merrily, merrily, shall I live now,

Under the blossom that hangs on the bough— Merrily, merrily, shall I live now,

Under the blossom that hangs on the bough."
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough."
With a fine hanny smile I wooden hand

With a fine, happy smile, Lyveden heard the song out.

Then he stepped to my lady and caught

her two hands.

"Exquisite," he said, glowing. "Exquisite, Valerie. I never knew you had such a lovely voice."

As he spoke, the girl's knees sagged, and he was just in time to catch her before she

Her collapse was momentary. She was not, I suppose, unconscious for more than five seconds. It was, indeed, at her bidding that Anthony set her down upon a low stone seat.

It was natural that he should be greatly

concerned

"Oh, my sweet, it was my fault. I frightened you. I know I did. Lean your head back. That's right. I was all worked up about that rotten dream. I'll never mention it again. I'm so very sorry, dear. I wouldn't have upset you for anything. And you sang so beautifully.... Why did you sing, Valerie?"

"I—I don't know. I heard a bee humming, and that made me think of the song.

It was very silly."

"It was very sweet, lass. And I just loved it. And, oh, my lady, please never think of our misunderstanding again. I felt I wanted just to know, but that was all. D'you feel better now?" Valerie nodded. "Are you sure?"

" Quite."

"Shall I get you some water?"

"No, thanks, lad. I'm all right now."
Kneeling on one knee beside her, Anthony

patted her hand.

"I'm so thankful.... I can't get over your singing like that ... I felt—carried away. I shall remember it always." He sighed happily. "I've got so many happy memories to take away."

Valerie sat up straight.

"To take away?" she breathed.

"My dear, I've been here nearly six months already. It's only with an effort that I can remember that I'm your guest. I don't want to go. Drifting along like this is simply perfect, but . . . there's such a lot to be done . . . heaps."

"There's plenty of time."

"I know, but—well, look at my clothes, for one thing. I'm not fit to be seen."

The girl breathed again. Then-

"Oh, yes, you are, old chap. Fitter than you think. Besides, you don't have to stay in London because you're going to a tailor."

"I know," said Anthony slowly. "I know. But it isn't only that. You see, my lady, when I came here to your house, it was as a footman. . . . And I think I'd better leave it as—well, no more than a friend. That's a big enough step, in all conscience.

After a little—a very little—I shall come again, Valerie . . ."

His fingers closed about hers.

"You never came here as a footman," said the girl. "You came as my beloved. You went out of the garden of 'The Leather Bottel' that very first day—mylord. What does it matter what else you were—are—will be? Oh, Anthony, you dear, honourable child..."

With his disengaged hand Lyveden

covered his eyes.

"I meant to be so strong," he said humbly.

"God forgive me, I'm very weak. You see
—I love you so." His head bowed, he took
hold of her other hand. "My lady, my
beautiful lady, will you marry this lover of
yours—this irresolute child?"

"Yes," said Valerie, "I will." Anthony fell upon both knees.

"I worship you," he said simply. "Ever since that first day at the inn, you've had my heart in your hands. Sleeping, waking, your voice has rung in my ears; and my eyes have seen you in the background—a tall dark girl, with the air of a queen . . . always . . always . . . You've lighted pantries, you've honoured servants' halls, you've turned a third-class carriage into a bower . . . And, when I came to know you, the face of the earth was changed. I didn't know there was such a being in all the world. I don't think you ever were born: I think you stepped out of a fairy tale some midsummer eve." He stopped to lay his head reverently upon the blue silk knees. "And you—are—to be my wife . . . In a few short weeks' time you're going to take my name-stand all in white by my side—put off your glorious girlhood for the last time, and go away—to live with me—for ever . . ." The cool firm fingers laid hold of his. "Wherever I am, your footfalls will be about me, your perfume will be in the air, your smile will gladden my eyes . . . Oh, Valerie, my love, my darling, my queen—you've made me a king . .

Slowly Valerie led the strong rough palms

up to her throat.

"If I've made you a king, lad," she breathed, "you mustn't kneel to me."

Getting upon his feet, Anthony pressed his lips to the slight fingers.

Valerie rose also.

"If I've made you a king, lad, you mustn't kiss my hand."

Anthony took her in his arms and looked

into her eyes.

"I was wrong," he said, smiling. "You

didn't step out of your fairy tale. You never left it. You've just invited me in."

Valerie put up her mouth.

Nineteen days had slipped by—careless, halcyon days, the matchless morning of a golden festival.

Jack and Jill were beyond imagination

happy.

Lyveden had been prevailed upon to stay in Hampshire, and when he must visit London, to return the same night. I am not certain that these days were not the best of all. Valerie saw him off in the morning: the two had all day to think upon their state; his home-coming at even delivered a perfect reverie.

The last of these flying visits must be recorded, for it was unlike its fellows, and, though I cannot answer for Lyveden,

Valerie will remember it always.

There is no doubt at all that Anthony was growing quite accustomed to the liberal atmosphere of Lincoln's Inn Fields. As he bent his steps Westward, he found the huge square admirable. For comfortable dignity, no other square he could remember compared with it. decided, was because its sides were not too high for its area. London, as a whole, had grown up. Had she grown outward instead, perhaps . . . He remembered suddenly that she had grown outward as well—out of all conscience since Pepys had taken pleasure in Lincoln's Inn Fields. With a contented sigh Lyveden reflected that by nine-thirty that evening he would be back at Bell Hammer. The sweet smell of the country, the song of the wind in tree-tops—above all, the abundance of cool soft air, seemed to have become essential to his life. For the present, at any rate, he had no use for Town. It choked him. He was glad, however, that his solicitor's office was in Lincoln's Inn Fields . .

Some clock announced the hour—a quarter to four. The ex-officer quickened his pace. Savile Row had to be visited, and Pall Mall. Most important of all, a coupé had to be proved . . . Anthony's heart beat faster. The car was for Valerie.

As he left Kingsway behind, the gross belch of a motor-horn demanded passage. Anthony fell to wondering whether his sweet would not prefer a less fashionable usher. The other got there, of course, but it was Rabelaisian. Perhaps . . .

The sound of a collision between two

pedestrians disturbed his musing.

It was nothing. Chin on shoulder, an errand-boy had collided with a man in a silk hat. Anthony was so close to the latter he could have touched him.

The boy muttered an apology, and the man

laughed.

"My fault as much as yours," he said lazily, and passed on.

It was Dr. Heron.

Anthony reeled against the wall.

Observing his movement, two typists squeaked with pretended alarm, and then, giving him a wide berth, lurched on, convulsed with mirth and clutching one another.

To the poor woman who approached him and asked if he were ill, Anthony at first said nothing at all. Then he replied dazedly that he was "all right," and moved un-

certainly away.

Arrived at the corner of Drury Lane, he hesitated, looking round helplessly, as if he were not sure of his way. Immediately opposite, a large efficient-looking ironmonger's shop presented a plain, well-kept, familiar face...

Anthony stared at it with a dropped jaw. The errand-boy, who had found his demeanour promising, and had been loitering in the hope of developments, took up a good position in the gutter and fairly drank Lyveden in. Almost at once another of his species joined him.

After a prolonged stare—

"Wot's 'e doin' of?" said the newcomer. "Sayin' is prares?"

The other sniggered.

The noise aroused Anthony. With an effort he straightened himself. . . . Then he walked unsteadily across the street and into the shop.

The manager came forward.

"Have those mattocks come in?"

For a second the man peered at him. Then—

"Oh, Major Lyveden, isn't it? Yes, sir. Six 'Lightnin' mattocks it was. I sent you a card, sir, three weeks ago. I've got the six on one side for you, sir."

"I'll take them now."

"Certainly, sir." He turned to an assistant and gave directions. Then: "Excuse me, sir. Jim!"

A boy came at a run.

"Fetch me that envelope off of the top o' my blottin'-pad. It's pinned there." He turned to Lyveden. "When you was 'ere last time, sir, you dropped your ticket. I kept it by, in case you come in again, thinkin' you might be glad of it. It ain't six months yet, sir, since you was 'ere, so it's still good."

A moment later Lyveden was looking fixedly at the return half of a third-class ticket which had been issued at Chipping Norton.

"Thanks," he said slowly, slipping it into his pocket. "I'm much obliged."

He paid for the goods and waited whilst a taxi was fetched.

Then he followed the mattocks into the cab, and told the surly driver to go to Paddington. . . .

Five hours later he staggered, rather than walked, along the wasted track and up to

the cottage door.

There had been no roan to meet him, and the mattocks had made their weight felt after the first two miles. He laid them down thankfully.

For a moment he looked about him.

Behind him—over towards Girdle—the sun had just gone down. And Gramarye . . . Gramarye had never looked one half so beautiful. . . . All her hard lines were gone. Every sacred twig of her had put on a wedding garment. The wild mystery of the place had been exquisitely veiled. The majesty of desolation was in full dress. Far as the eye could reach, the toss of the glorious woods had become unspeakably enriched . . . maddening . . .

His eyes glittering, Lyveden hugged himself in a paroxysm of glee. The man was

just gloating. . . .

Then he strode to the wood-shed.

"Well, Patch," he said cheerily. "Has Patch been a good little——"

The sentence snapped off short.

For a moment Anthony stared at the empty staple.

Then he turned on his heel.

"Patch!" he cried sharply. "Patch!"
After listening intently for a moment, he stepped hastily on to the wasted track and began to whistle. . . .

Presently, trembling with anxiety, he started to stumble along the trail, whistling

frantically. . . .

Seated in the hall at Bell Hammer, Valerie looked at the clock. As she did so, the faint crunch of wheels upon gravel told that the car was leaving to meet the down train. An instant later the clock struck nine. Miss French threaded her needle thoughtfully. . . .

Curled by her side upon the sofa, a little

white dog with a black patch breathed

stertorously.

A door opened, and a servant appeared with a letter. This had been expressed. Valerie laid down her work, and, after a glance at the envelope, opened it curiously.

DEAREST VALERIE,

Do you know anything of Peter? We only got back from America two days ago, and when we rang up his club—he was living there while we were away—they said they hadn't seen him since March! Of course we're frightfully worried. He had the car with him, and we're trying to trace that. Oh, Valerie, father's just come in and said that the car's been found at Carlisle. In a garage there, and that two men left it to be seen to a month ago, but the police think he bought it from them and is afraid. Please wire if you—

With a crash the small table by her side upset its complement of violets on to the parquet, there was a wild scrabble of paws, and Patch was at the front door, snuffing the sill and whining tremulously. . . .

Valerie got upon her feet.

"What is it, Patch?" she said. "He isn't here yet."

For a second the terrier listened.

The next moment he was almost beating himself against the woodwork.

Letter in hand, Valerie crossed the hall and opened the door.

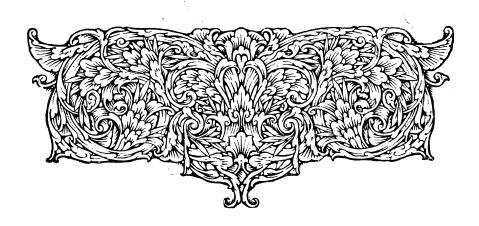
The dog rushed out into the drive.

For a moment he stood there, plainly straining his ears.

An instant later he was flying down the avenue. . . .

The glow of the sunset faded. Evening gave way to dusk. Night stole into her throne-room. . . . One by one, men, spent with their labour, went to their rest. Pillowed upon the bosom of the countryside, villages fell asleep. And through them, while they slept, a little white dog went pelting breathlessly under the cold moonlight—now running, now dropping to a fast walk, now hesitating, now plunging on desperately, sometimes to the east, sometimes to the west, but in the main northward . . . due north, sirs . . . in the direction of the Cotswold Hills.

The first story of a new scries by Dornford Yates will appear in the next number. The scenes will be laid upon the Continent, and the characters will include the now familiar figures of Berry and Daphne Pleydell, their cousins Jonah and Jill Mansel, the charming American girl, Adèle, and her husband, the raconteur of their earlier adventures in the greatly successful stories now known in book form as "The Brother of Daphne," "The Courts of Idleness," and "Berry and Co."



BOWLS AND BOWLING

THE LEVEL-GREEN GAME OF TO-DAY

By EDMUND WOODROFFE, C.A.,

Brownswood Bowling Club; President of the Alexandra Palace Bowling Club; General Secretary, English Bowling Association; ex-Secretary, Middlesex County Bowling Association

Photographs by Sport & General

HE game and ancient sport of bowls receives recognition in references made to historical and legendary stories of our islands, but is rarely written upon as one of the national outdoor games

lawn of ordinary meadowland turf, is the oldest type. The crown greens are generally carefully-laid natural turf greens, with artificially built and drained foundations, and the highest point of the playing surface



GENERAL VIEW OF THE ENGLISH BOWLING ASSOCIATION TEAM v. HASTINGS MATCH AT THE OPENING OF THE NEW PAVILION ON THE GREENS AT WHITE ROCK, HASTINGS.

recognised in the athletic life of the British Isles, the Overseas Dominions, and the Protectorates wherein Britishers forgather for healthful recreation and friendly rivalry in various sports. The reason is that bowls as an amateur pastime languished in England and almost died out in the southern portion of the country.

There are three variants of the game—the variable-green, crown-green, and level-green. In all probability the variable game, played upon any suitable land, more or less uneven, with the playing surface or playing

is at the centre, with the fall on all sides sloping to the edges. The level-green game needs the same artificial bed or foundation, but the playing surface is laid as true and level as modern devices and skill permit, and in order to obtain this comparative degree of perfection, the turf laid on these greens must be natural sea-washed turf lifted from the banks of tidal estuaries, such as the Solway Firth. In the course of time the finding and cutting of these turves and the construction of the modern bowling-greens have become a distinct industry,



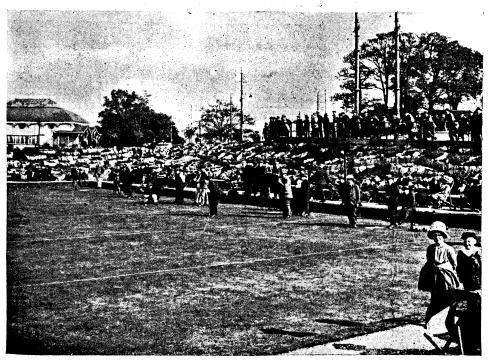
W. J. THOMAS, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE ENGLISH BOWLING ASSOCIATION, BOWLING A FAST SHOT AT THE OPENING OF THE NEW BOWLING GREEN AT THE ALEXANDRA PALACE.

mostly Scottish, and the green-keepers placed in charge of these greens possess a

special skill and gain experience entirely outside the knowledge of gardeners and horticulturists engaged in the construction and preparation of tennis, cricket, or other grass lands devoted to outdoor sports.

Each type of the three games has variations in the play, the rules and the regulations, and the bowls in each game differ in degree of bias and weight, while the accessories vary with the needs of the play.

The crown-green game is domiciled in Lancashire and Yorkshire and the Northern Midlands, but has failed to spread either northwards through Northumberland, Durham, and Cumberland to the borders of Scotland or southwards through the Midland Counties. The variable game is played in almost every village and town in the East Anglian Counties, but elsewhere the old primitive greens vanished until, with few exceptions, the game became unknown in stretches of country in the South and West and particularly in London. The level-green game is, therefore, the successor of the ancient variable game in the greater portion of the country, and upon the revival of the sport in the Metropolis, the Home Counties, and the West and South the demands for the keenest of greens and the more skilled methods of play were met by the intro-



GENERAL VIEW OF THE 42 YARDS SQUARE LEVEL-GREEN AT THE ALEXANDRA PALACE NEW BOWLING GREEN.

duction of the better-organised level-green game as played in the Northern Counties and universally throughout Scotland. In Great War, has not yet reached its zenith.

The first level-green, and also the first



In Ireland the game was practised at an early date,

and in Ulster the sites of very old bowling greens have been found in Antrim and Down. The level-green game was intro-



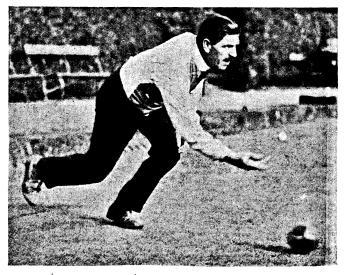
EDMUND WOODROFFE, GENERAL SECRETARY, ENGLISH BOWLING ASSOCIA-TION, DRIVING IN THE MATCH OF THE E.B.A. v. HASTINGS AT THE OPENING OF THE NEW PAVILION ON THE GREENS AT WHITE ROCK, HASTINGS.

Scotland the game has never lost favour, and with characteristic thoroughness attention was given to its improvement; but

undoubtedly the wintersister game of curling on the ice kept alive an enthusiasm for the summer variant of curling on the greens.

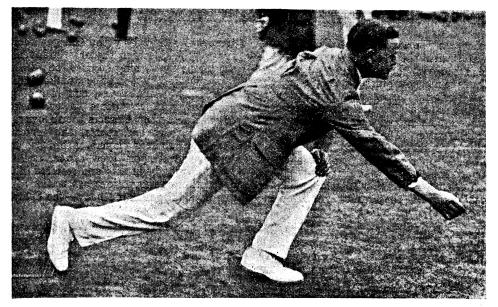
With the native sense of acquisition, the majority of Scottish players claim the pastime of bowls as entirely a Scottish game of almost prehistoric origin; but while acknowledging the level-green game to be the Scottish development, the authentic history of ancient London and original records of municipalities such as Southampton give the English players the necessary authorities upon which to base an equal claim. It is, however, fully granted that the Metropolis is indebted to London - Scotsmen for bringing to London

the level-green game as a pure amateur sport, and opening the period of revival that, while temporarily checked by the



G. OWEN (SOUTHEND-ON-SEA), ESSEX COUNTY CHAMPION, IN THE ENGLISH BOWLING ASSOCIATION'S INVITATION TOURNAMENT FOR THE W. J. THOMAS TROPHY AT THE NORTH LONDON CLUB, HIGHGATE.

duced from Scotland in the year 1842, when the Belfast Bowling Club was formed and a new green laid in the metropolis of



MR. DUFF, PRESIDENT OF THE LONDON SCOTTISH, DELIVERING A WELL-DIRECTED SHOT IN THE LONDON SCOTTISH v. LONDON ENGLISH MATCH AT BELLINGHAM GREEN, CATFORD.

Northern Ireland. Forty years later a fully equipped level-green was laid in Grosvenor Square, Dublin, by the Kenilworth Bowling Club. But the level-green game is more keenly followed in Ulster, and its clubs furnish the majority of players representing Ireland in the International tourneys.

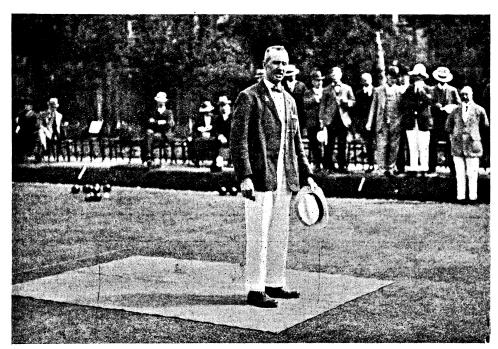
In London some fifty years ago there may have existed a few indifferently laid greens of primitive construction when London-Scottish residents in the northern suburb of Stoke Newington founded a bowling club. The present position of the game in London, with its ring of super-excellent



H. G. EDNEY PLAYING THE FINAL FOR THE SURREY BOWLING CHAMPIONSHIP AT NORWOOD.

greens, may be attributed to their dissatisfaction with the conditions under which the game was being played upon the primitive meadow-grass greens. To end the complaints and discontent, the members of the Brownswood Bowling Club visited the Cumberland shore of the Solway Firth and selected a stretch of the sea-washed turf, which was brought to their grounds and laid on a properly constructed bowling-green foundation. The few other private clubs then established in the Metropolis became dissatisfied with the meadow-grass bowling

game was attained by the Glasgow manufacturer, Mr. Thomas Taylor, who invented a machine for turning bowls to any specific mathematical bias, and the standardisation of weight, circumference, and bias of the bowls brought the game to the degree of exactness that attracts the followers of other pastimes and sports, and increases the skill of all keen players. From this date the improved sport grew apace, and the increase of clubs in Scotland resulted in the absorption of the various associations into one national governing body—the Scottish



A. P. LONDON, CAPTAIN OF THE NEW ZEALAND TEAM, MAKING A PATRIOTIC SPEECH AT THE FIRST ENGLAND v. NEW ZEALAND TEST MATCH AT MUSWELL HILL.

surfaces upon which they played, and reconstructed the old greens or laid new ones upon the level-green plans.

In turn it was necessary to adopt the Scottish laws of the level-green play, and these pioneer clubs promoted an association—the London and Southern Counties—for the purpose of encouraging the increase of private clubs and the laying down of scawashed turf greens. In Scotland several local associations had long been performing similar functions, and in England the Midland Counties Association and the North-Eastern Counties Association had been formed with similar objects. At length, in the year 1871, a necessary improvement of the

Bowling Association. Its first achievement was the codification of the laws of the game, which are now the copyright of the Scottish Association. Meantime the level-green game had become the established code of play in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada, and governing associations had been founded in each of those Overseas Dominions.

Although the ancient game had been introduced into Eastern Canada by the Duke of Kent, who laid the first green at the fortress town and naval harbour at Halifax for the use of his officers and principal residents of the Nova Scotian stronghold, it was the incoming Scotsmen



THE NEW ZEALAND TEAM (4 RINKS, 16 PLAYERS) WHICH PLAYED THE FIRST ENGLAND v. NEW ZEALAND TEST MATCH AT MUSWELL HILL.

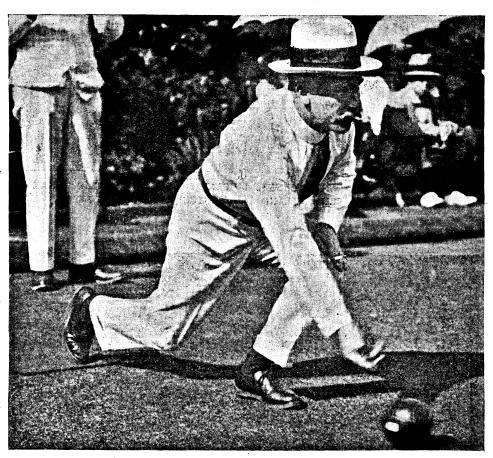


THE ENGLISH PLAYERS CHOSEN FROM PREVIOUS YEARS' INTERNATIONAL (4 RINKS, 15 PLAYERS), WITH TWO RESERVES, FOR THE FIRST TEST MATCH OF ENGLAND v. NEW ZEALAND AT MUSWELL HILL.

many years afterwards who spread the game through the Provinces, and Scottish enthusiasm also introduced the Scottish rules into most parts of the Empire. The natural result followed that the Scottish Association became the recognised M.C.C. of the game, and the clubs and players in England following their ancient or the variable rules of play were isolated.

The season of 1899 is notable in modern

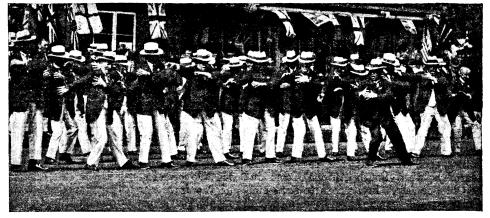
At this time the greatest cricketer of his day, the late Dr. W. G. Grace, took up the game, and evidently saw the need of a separate national association, not only to influence the game in England, but to introduce generally the level-green code in order that English bowlers could combine for the especial purpose of meeting the other kingdoms in annual international games, and to join in official inter-visits with the



D. IRVINE WATSON, CAPTAIN OF THE ENGLISH TEAM, WHO HAS THE REPUTATION OF BEING THE FINEST BOWLER IN ENGLAND TO-DAY. BOWLING IN THE FIRST TEST MATCH BETWEEN ENGLAND AND NEW ZEALAND AT MUSWELL HILL.

records by reason of a tour of the British Isles by a party of Australian and New Zealand bowlers. The visitors noted the lack of organisation outside Scotland, and through this criticism the Imperial Bowling Association was organised, and the players on public or municipally owned greens were encouraged to affiliate their semi-public clubs to the new association, and enter a competition for British championships under its auspices.

associations in other sections of our farflung Empire. Through the active aid of the principal clubs in Northumberland and Cumberland, and others in the Southern Counties and Surrey in particular, the bowlers gathered around the Doctor and his cricketing companion, the Hon. Arthur C. Somerset, and in June, 1903, in the cricket pavilion of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, it was decided to establish forthwith the

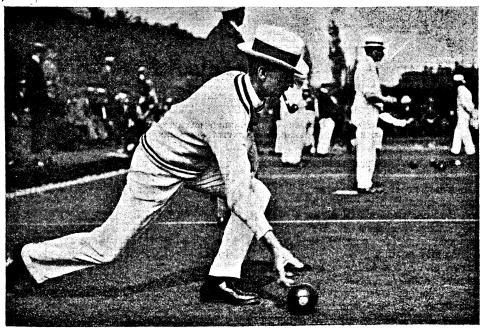


THE NEW ZEALAND TEAM GIVING THEIR MAORI WAR SONG BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE NEW ZEALAND v. DEVON MATCH AT TORQUAY.

national body—The English Bowling Association.

In Ireland and Wales governing bodies had been organised, and all three national associations received permission to use the copyright laws of the Scottish body. These laws were adopted, and arrangements made to hold the first series of International matches between Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales on the green of the South London Bowling Club at Wandsworth Common and the green—since abandoned—of the club at the Crystal Palace. In order to complete the organisation and enable

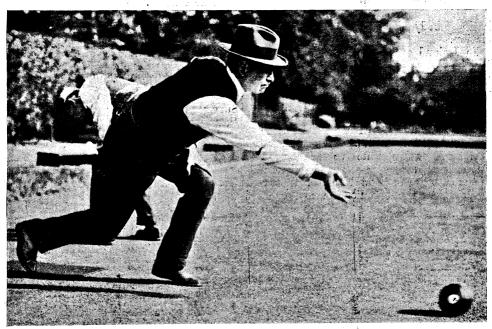
the game to hold again the place of a national sport, the pioneers of the four associations met in London and established the International Bowling Board, to confirm the joint adoption of the level-green laws and to encourage and control all matches of an International nature held in the United Kingdom. The regulations as adjusted were signed by John Hunter, of Belfast, on behalf of Ireland; Wm. A. Morgan, of Cardiff, on behalf of Wales; Dr. W. G. Grace on behalf of England, and Andrew H. Hamilton, W.S., of Edinburgh, on behalf of Scotland. Since the year 1903 the



A. P. LONDON, THE NEW ZEALAND CAPTAIN, BOWLING TO "TAKE OUT A SHOT" IN THE NEW ZEALAND ε_{\bullet} MIDDLESEX COUNTY MATCH AT LYONS CLUB, SUDBURY HILL.

annual International contest has been held in each country in rotation, the official tour of the Australian, Canadian, and New Zealand Teams arranged, and two All-British Teams have been sent to Eastern Canada. The summer of 1922 will be notable for the visit of an Australian team of picked amateur bowlers, who will tour the British Isles under the joint control of the International Bowling Board and the Australian Bowling Council, and the next few seasons will assuredly find a South African Team in the Old Country. Invitations to send out official British teams have been received from every part of the Empire in which

and this season the English Association was able to arrange nineteen county matches against the New Zealand Team now touring the British Isles. There are yet many counties with numerous greens of the old type, unable to meet the conditions of the modern game; but when one club decides to face the expenditure, and constructs the required green, it is found that others follow. A satisfactory feature in the development of the pastime that will appeal to most lovers of games is that the organisers of the increasingly popular open tournaments, such as Bournemouth, Hastings, Weston-super Mare, and Brighton, adopt



A. E. GODSALL (FOREST HILL), ENGLISH SINGLE-HANDED CHAMPION, MAKING A CLEAN DELIVERY IN THE ENGLISH BOWLING ASSOCIATION'S INVITATION TOURNAMENT AT HIGHGATE.

the game has its respective controlling

organisation.

In the year 1905 the Imperial Bowling Association was dissolved, and its clubs and trophies were absorbed by the other associations. The next movement in England was the natural tendency to play county against county, and the Kent, Surrey, and Essex clubs were foremost in forming county associations, and, with the addition of other counties, it became possible to hold the annual inter-county tourney for the County Championship. The county combination instils the sporting spirit of "playing for one's county,"

in their entirety the Amateur Championship rules of the governing body, the English Bowling Association. This article is intended to trace the origin and development in England of the modern amateur levelgreen game only. The methods of play and technique of the game are ably dealt with in text-books edited by skilled players, the ancient history of bowls can be read in works in the British Museum, but the authentic record of "The Southampton Bowling Green Club" may fittingly be given to prove the claim of bowls to be a most ancient English outdoor pastime and game, appealing to the instinct for heredity

and history common to all true Englishmen.

Copy of the Report of the Town Clerk of Southampton, prepared in accordance with a resolution of the Southampton County Council, respecting the Southampton Bowling Green.

"GENTLEMEN,

"Pursuant to your instructions, I beg

to report as follows:-

"It is extremely difficult—in fact, it may be regarded as impracticable—to trace the origin of the acquirement by the town of Southampton of the Close or Inclosure, or

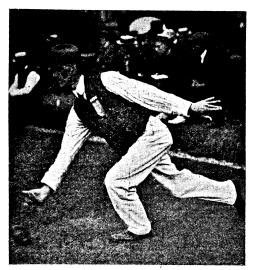


J. YEO (NEW SOUTH WALES) PLAYING AT THE SOUTH LONDON CLUB, WANDSWORTH COMMON.

Paddock of Land, now for centuries past known as 'the Bowling Green.'

"It is probable that it was an Inclosure as far back as 1299, and was even at that remote period called 'The Master's Close,' and (according to Davies' History of Southampton) it was used as a place of recreation in the year 1550, and in the year 1637 was described as a ground where many gentlemen, with the genteel Merchants of this town, take their recreation.

"Upon an old plan of Southampton, dated 1611, the ground in question is shown with figures of men thereon playing at bowls. No mention is made of this ground in the



C. KNOWLES, OF TORONTO, IN THE CANADA v. SURREY COUNTY MATCH AT KINGSTON.

Survey of Lands belonging to the Corporation, dated 1634.

"At the present time the ground is, and has been for the past 100 years and upwards, occupied by a Club called 'The Southampton Bowling Green Club,' who pay no rent or acknowledgment therefor to the town, and who have built thereon a club house



THOMAS WOOF, EX-PRESIDENT OF THE ENGLISH BOWLING ASSOCIATION, PREPARING TO DRIVE IN THE MATCH OF THE E.B.A. v. HASTINGS AT THE OPENING OF THE NEW PAVILION ON THE GREENS AT WHITE RCCK, HASTINGS.

or pleasure house, and have also expended considerable sums of money in laying out and maintaining the ground as a Bowling Green, and who levy a yearly subscription upon their members for defraying the expenses connected therewith.

"To summarise the matter, it appears probable that the Ground was set apart for Recreation and Bowling from the earliest period of the history of the Town, and that a 'Master of the Green' was elected as far back as 1299, when it was called 'The

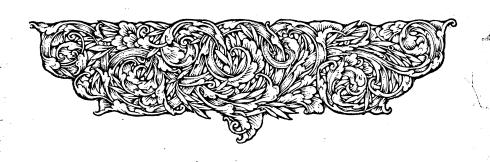
Master's Close,' and that although the ground itself no doubt belongs to the town, the present Club or Association, who occupy and manage the Green, would appear to have obtained certain prescriptive rights thereon from length of usure for the purpose of playing the game of bowls.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

"Your obedient servant,

"G. B. NALDER,
"Town Clerk.

"Southampton, August 8th, 1894."



WHICH?

THE hill is cool with wind and shade,
The lowland hot with sun;
Of all the tunes that love has played,
Which is the tenderest one?

The hill is steep and free and wide, The lowland shut away; Of all the dreams that yet abide, Which will the longest stay?

The hill is loud with larks in choir, The lowland quiet with sheep; Of all the beds for those who tire, Which gives the deepest sleep?

The hill will longer hold the light,
The lowland first find rest;
Of all the stars that come with night,
Which leads the wanderer best?

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.

THE LAUGH

By RALPH STOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

ROWTHER was waiting. He had no notion of it. He thought he was enjoying the cool of the morning with a pipe on the verandah, as he had been in the habit of doing for seven years past.

But in reality he was waiting.

And presently it appeared—the peak of a lugsail gliding slowly along the far side of the reef. He picked up a battered telescope and trained it on the moving scrap of canvas. Nothing more could be seen until of a sudden, and with surprising completeness, the rest of the sail burst into view, together with the dark bulk of an outrigger canoe. It had turned into the boat passage, and was now scudding through it on the eight-knot current that converted Rahiti pass into a mill-race at the turn of the tide.

Here there were pale green shallows beset with coral fangs, and rocks rearing a vicious head out of the swirl in mid-channel, yet through them the canoe threaded a headlong course, steered with unerring skill by the quick eye and practised hand of a slight figure in a fluttering blue wrapper

that crouched alert in the stern.

With the telescope resting on the verandah rail, Crowther punctuated the performance with grunts of approval: "Ah! Good! Umph! Now—" He had taught Mata how to take Rahiti pass at the turn of the tide, as he had taught her all that she knew, and his was the intense pride of the tutor in an accomplished pupil. It was natural.

The canoe had now reached the untroubled waters of the lagoon, and, before its prow had slid to rest on the beach in front of the bungalow, the girl leapt into the knee-deep water and held aloft a gleaming

"Sanqua!" she cried, and hurried up the

coral pathway to the house.

A discreet clapping of hands proceeded from the verandah where Crowther sprawled in a cane chair.

"Is that all?" she demanded, standing

before him like a crestfallen child. "And for a sangua, too?"

"What more do you want?" grinned

Crowther.

For answer she bent down and kissed him, then sank to the mats native fashion and launched into a detailed account of the capture of Crowther's favourite fish.

'He was lying half under the reef-for shade, I suppose—with his tail and a bit sticking out. For a long time I couldn't make up my mind what to do-"

" And the tail and a bit waited while you

did it? interpolated Crowther.

"Yes. He must have been asleep. Do fish sleep, uncle?"
"No," said Crowther at a hazard.

"Well, then, I must have kept very still -I did keep very still-and thought and thought. The line would have been the safest, but somehow the spear seemed more

"Sporting," suggested Crowther.
"Yes. So I tried to remember what you told me about-illusory reflection and all

that, and it came out right."

Crawford inclined his head in mock recognition of the doubtful compliment, but it Mata babbled on in passed unheeded. growing excitement, using indescribable little gestures to illustrate her meaning.

"I aimed a good three inches to the left of him, and it was queer to feel the spear stick into something that didn't look as if it was there. But it was there, and didn't he wriggle! And here he is, and—and it's

my birthday, uncle."
"Really?" said Crowther, with studied unconcern. "Well, if you'll run along and get into something dry, we'll have break-

fast."

While she was gone, he took his seat at the head of the table, laid as usual on the verandah, and pretended to read a book propped against the milk jug. But again he was waiting, and not for long. Mata slipped into her customary chair, and was in the act of adding the three well-known lumps of sugar to his comprehensive cup of tea, when the exclamation came, half word, half gasp: "Uncle!"

A moment later she was on his knee, one hand at his shoulder, the other upheld, the better to display a pretty little pearl neck-

lace.

"But they're real," she cried, with dancing

eyes, "really real!"

"Oh, no," muttered Crowther. "I went to great trouble about that necklet—chartered a schooner to bring the dud article all the way from Sydney."

But she was not listening to his heavy badinage that she knew so well. Her head sank to his shoulder, and there was the hint of a woman's inexplicable tears in her

eyes.

"Uncle," she said, playing with the middle button of his drill jacket, "you're

too good to me.'

"Much," he admitted promptly. "I often marvel at my own generosity, forbearance, and all the rest of it. It would be different if you gave any cause for it—if you were a good girl, for instance—but as it is——" He sighed heavily and lapsed into silence.

Mata slid from his knee and contemplated

him gravely.

"You're laughing at me," she accused. "You're always laughing at me. I wonder

if you ever won't."

The whimsical smile died of a sudden from Crowther's face. He leant forward and, taking her two small arms in his hands, stood her before him like a doll.

"You mustn't mind, Mata," he said in a voice that was new to her. "I have to laugh. If I didn't, I should do something that you wouldn't like half as much. You understand? I must laugh."

Mata stared at him wide-eyed, and nodded, though she did not understand in

the least.

"Many, many happy returns of the day, little girl," his strange, almost frightening voice went on, "and don't ever again dare to remind me when it's your birthday. There, run along—my tea's getting cold.

For once Mata failed to obey. She did not run, but walked, very slowly for her, down the verandah steps and along the beach, with the pearl necklet forgotten in her hand. Against the bole of a wind-bent palm she leant at last, staring over the sea. She was trying to understand. But out of her groping thoughts only the old, immutable truths emerged. This large man with the kindly eyes and tickling moustache was the most wonderful being in the world, the only being in the world. He knew everything and could do anything. What else was there to understand? She answered the question by turning her attention to the necklace, and in rather less than five minutes was flaunting its glories before the goggling eyes of her brown-skinned playmates of the beach. Mata was sixteen.

On the verandah, with his chair pushed back from the débris of breakfast, Crowther was engaged in the rather more protracted and infinitely less accommodating reflections of middle age. Mata was sixteen. Sixteen was a fairly advanced age for a child, wasn't it? And what was it that he had sworn to himself should occur on her sixteenth birthday-and on her fifteenth, and fourteenth, for the matter of that? He pretended that it was an effort to remember, though, as a fact, the thing had hovered over him like a cloud for some time past. was a pretty little game for a grown man to be playing with himself, this juggling with an evil hour by putting back the clock. It is popular, too, but, like most games, it comes to an end. Mata was sixteen. Mata

must go "outside."

Having decided so much, irrefutably this time, Crowther's musings led him back to the beginning of it all—that awful dawn ten years ago, when, on the tail end of a hurricane, a fine three-masted schooner loomed out of the murk to wind'ard, running under bare poles and head-on for Rahiti. The thing was as clear to him now-it always would be clear—as on the day that it happened. He remembered summoning the "boys," and buffeting his way along the wind-whipped beach shouting-shouting a warning to a ship in a hurricane a cable's length from the rocks! It was a sample of the inane things one is apt to do on occasion. Then the crash, almost drowned in the roar of surf, yet sickeningly distinct, and the hurtling of fragments across the beach. A splintered spar, he remembered, missed his head by a few feet; a strip of canvas encircled his legs, almost lifting him from his feet. Something tinkled on the rocks behind him, probably metal. Something else was swept into a rock pool and left there by the receding wave, a bundle by the look of it, that spun like a top in the swirl. But it was a movement of its own that claimed Crowther's sudden attention.

Either it was alive, or he had gone mad. In any case, he clambered down to the pool, despite the warning cries of the "boys," and made his escape with the bundle under one arm and a breaker seething about his waist.

It was alive. It was Mata, and a "boy" bore her, howling lustily, to the house.

Crowther stayed. He saw the schooner pounded into the semblance of a broken eggshell against the reef, and the battered remains sucked back into the turmoil, only to be hurled aloft on a mighty comber and pitched headlong into unknown depths. Nothing was left—nothing but the eternal surf breaking on Rahiti—so Crowther went home.

He found the living-room, his sacred living-room, in the possession of a minute person attired in a blanket, meditatively

munching a banana.

"Take it away," he told his Kanaka cook, and, going into his bedroom, shut the door. He could not wrench from his mind the awful picture of that ship, a home of warmth and light and life, buried—buried alive.

It was not until the evening that he could bring himself to endure an interview with the sole survivor, who stared at him with wide, inquiring eyes, and answered his questions, or failed to answer them, according to the whim of the moment. Crowther elicited the following: It was a female child of six. It rather wanted its father, though it seemed more perturbed over the loss of a kitten named Zip, or something like it. It could not remember its mother. It had no notion how it came to be in a rock pool on Rahiti, but, by the miracle of hurricanes that can pulverise an iron winch into a thousand fragments and leave a lamp chimney intact, it was unscathed. It had come a long way, from a big house in an immense city by the sea, probably one of the Pacific Coast towns, where it had a dog called Peter, and a horse that bucked when you squeezed a ball on the end of a string. Oh, and its name was Mata, which, being interpreted, undoubtedly meant Martha. That was all.

For several days Crowther wondered what he ought to do about it, and ended, as usual in the Islands, by doing nothing—nothing, that is, but letting the child play in sun and sea with the other juveniles of its species, that appeared to emanate from the labour lines in ever-increasing swarms.

It was a visit to the scene of the wreck that brought Crowther up with a round

He stood looking down into the unfathomable depths, thinking of the ship —the ship down there—and suddenly he said: "I promise." He became aware that he had spoken aloud, that he had given his word to someone or something. frightened him. From that hour his at itude towards the child changed. It seemed to dawn on him that she was something more than a diverting pet.

So, out of the ensuing years and his own efforts, had emerged the wondrous product that was Mata of the present day. was tall, lithe like a boy, and amazingly beautiful. She knew all that Crowther could teach her-how to handle a boat, swim without effort, look upon deceit of any sort as a species of cowardice and therefore beneath her, read a book, and have ideas of her own on a subject. Crowther looked upon her as the work of his hands, and never ceased to marvel at its excellence.

Yes, it might be said that he had kept his promise—so far. But what of the future? There were things that he could not teach her, things that she must know. Of late he had stumbled on the distressing truth that he had brought her up as a boy, and, in spite of him, she had grown into a woman—an annoying trick of Nature. He approached the painful subject with characteristic bluntness that evening of sixteenth birthday, as they sat reading by lamp-light.

"Mata," he said, "you know these advertisements of schools in the magazines academies, they seem to call 'em-with pictures of girls dancing, and paddling canoes, and camping out, and what not?

Mata looked up and nodded.

"Well, how would you like to go to

" Not a bit, thanks, uncle," said Mata. "They learn other things, you know," he struggled on-"things I can't teach you."

Mata's frank, grey eyes conveyed her disbelief.

So through endless ramifications the discussion waxed and waned.

"You mean," said Mata at last, closing her book with a snap of finality—" you mean you want me to go, uncle?"

And Crowther stared up at the ceiling before answering, and down at the mat-

strewn floor.

"Yes," he lied.

She went to her room, and Crowther, feeling nothing short of despicable, listened outside her door. She was weeping. Some-



"There was nothing he desired so much as solitude during that hour, yet presently he became aware of a figure

thing swept over him like a wave. He knocked, and entered. She was lying face downward on the counterpane.
"Mata—Mata!" he muttered stupidly.

She turned and drew him towards her.

"Uncle, you'll come too, won't you?" she pleaded.

Crowther took a grip of himself and sat

on the edge of the bed.
"Why, of course," he said huskily. "I'll come disguised as a gargoyle or something.

And we'll have a miniature Rahiti in the playground—I beg its pardon, 'campus' and at night I'll climb down from my perch on the imitation battlements, and we'll spear goldfish with a pickle fork by candle-light, and-

And again Crowther had contrived to

laugh.

So Mata went "outside" to acquire such additional frills as an enlightened age deems indispensable to budding womanhood, and



flitting swiftly along the beach. It wore a faded blue wrapper, and its hair streamed in the wind."

Crowther settled down to wait once more, this time for two mortal years.

It was a dreary business, as dreary as Mata appeared to find her end of the contract. Crowther had been under the impression that no feminine mind was proof against the lures of "outside," yet after eighteen months of them, and with only another six to go, she was still, according to her unfailing letters, "longing for home," which meant Rahiti, and—yes, himself.

The thought sent the blood to his head. He tried to laugh at it, but found the process increasingly difficult as time passed. Why should he always have to laugh? By Heavens, he would laugh no more! He would make of Rahiti a home—a real home—worth "longing for"! He would—As a matter of fact, what Crowther did

As a matter of fact, what Crowther did the next morning was to subject his reflection in the looking-glass to an unsmiling survey, and with equal gravity extract four grey hairs from his head. After which he set to work with new-born zest, planning

certain additions to the bungalow.

It was about this time that the monthly schooner brought a youth named Owen to Rahiti seeking employment. Crowther gave it him, partly for company and partly because there was plenty to be done. He was of the reserved, earnest type, with a shock of blond hair, unbelievably pink cheeks, and a habit of blushing which in itself is a refreshing phenomenon south of the Line. Crowther took to him on the

"I want you to take the copra entirely off my hands," he told him in the mosquitoproof office with its battered, ill-kept ledger and litter of island specimens. "I'm sick of the sight and smell and feel of it. I-er-

have other things to do."

Owen gravely inclined his head.
"Sit down," said Crowther; "have a cigar. We'd better try and understand one another as soon as possible. What brought you to these outrageous parts?"

Owen seated himself, and blushed.

"Don't tell me if you don't want to," Crowther added. "It's only vulgar curiosity on my part."

"I was in a bank," blurted Owen.

"Good," said Crowther, and pushed the disreputable ledger across the writing table. You'd better take this over as well.

"I have been going through it," said Owen with professional gravity. system is bad, if you don't mind my saying

"Haven't a doubt of it," beamed Crowther, " and if you can put it right, and keep up the level of production-"

"Don't you mean increase production?"

corrected Owen.

Crowther laughed.

"I suppose so," he admitted, "though, as a business, I'm afraid I've lost my enthusiasm for Rahiti. I look upon it more in the light of a home."

"Quite," agreed Owen, with his quaint air of punctiliousness. "A very beautiful

home," he added thoughtfully.

Crowther's glance wandered to the window with its sectional view, like a framed and glowing water-colour, of beach and palm and sea.

"Not bad," he muttered. "But nothing to what I'm going to make it--" He turned in his chair with an abrupt reversion to the subject in hand. "So if you'll look after your end of things, Mr.-er-Owen, I'll look after mine, and we'll see what

happens."

What happened during the next few months was considerable. A wing was added to the bungalow containing rooms —such rooms! There were yakawood panelling, a standard lamp, mats as finely woven as a Panama hat, and imported furniture of unsurpassed luxury elegance. Crowther was in the habit of musing amidst these splendours as in a palace of dreams. There was only a month now—only a month-

As for Owen, he appeared incapable of anything but work. A day with copra, followed by an evening with a new and immaculate ledger, seemed the acme of his Undoubtedly there was some powerful incentive behind the boy's efforts. His innate earnestness had developed into a fervour that Crowther welcomed as unique in his experience of overseers, but was at a loss to understand.

At a loss, that is, until late one evening he visited the boy's quarters and found him, head on arms, and arms on open ledger, sound asleep.

Crowther shook him gently.

"Hi, this won't do," he said. "Sling that thing in the corner and turn in, and be a bit late to-morrow if you can manage it. I'm not going to have overseers killing

themselves on the premises."

Owen looked up, the habitual flush mounting to his cheeks. His folded arms slid from the ledger, and with them a square of pasteboard that fluttered to the floor at Crowther's feet. He picked it up mechanically, and was returning it to the table, when the action was arrested in mid-air. For a moment he stood motionless, staring slackjawed at a photograph of Mata, then placed it on the table and drew back into the shadow.

"So you know my niece," he said evenly, yet in a voice that he failed to recognise as

his own.

Owen pushed back his chair and stood before Crowther. There was no confusion in the movement, only the supreme selfconsciousness of youth.

"I've been meaning to tell you," he

"But you didn't," Crowther interpolated sweetly, "so why should you now? Because I happen to have blundered on to your secret?"

"There should have been no secretthere is no secret," Owen corrected himself. "We met at a friend's house during the holidays. I-we-"

"You can cut the details, if you don't

mind," said Crowther.

"Very well, then," Owen's head went up as though in answer to a challenge. "I

"Naturally," said Crowther. "And as you're so bent on unburdening yourself, what then?"

"I am working-for her," answered the boy simply. "I came here because I knew it was her home, and that she would be returning soon. I was afraid, if I told you of our-acquaintance, it might influence you against me."

" Why ? "

"I knew how fond you must be of her." How?"

"Naturally," mimicked Owen, with a

hint of apology.

There was neither question nor answer to that. Crowther remained silent, his face mercifully in shadow, watching the antics of this pink-cheeked destroyer of dreams. They had "met at a friend's house . . . during the holidays"! What more was needed? What could be more natural, in the most natural of worlds? Crowther asked himself this assiduously as a curb to the insane desire to take this same pink-cheeked head and dash it against the wall. It was still saying something. . . .

"I wanted you to form an unbiassed opinion of me, Mr. Crowther. Are you

satisfied?"

" I ? " Crowther advanced out of the gloom. The mask of a smile was on his face. "Satisfied?" He had intended to say something else-Heaven knew what !--but instead he laughed.

"You find it amusing," Owen accused,

with a ludicrous air of offended dignity. "You must excuse me," Crowther apologised. "It's an unfortunate habit of mine. No, I don't find it in the least amusing, only atisfactory—entirely satisfactory, Mr.—er -Owen. Good night."

The next morning Owen was down with his first bout of fever, and three days later

Mata arrived.

Crowther saw the schooner creeping down from the horizon, and Mata, a slim, unmistakable figure in the bows, waving a handkerchief far out to sea because she knew that he would be watching for her through the telescope.

It seemed to Crowther that the " outside " had made surprisingly little difference, or was it the fashion of the moment for young ladies in bewilderingly dainty muslins, and their hair "up," to welcome their alleged uncles by nearly strangling them? He did not know. He did not care.

"Oh, it's good-good!" she cried, clinging to his arm and glancing bright-eyed about her as they passed along the landing and up the powdered coral pathway to the

house.

With the mock ceremony of a flunkey, Crowther bowed her into the palace of dreams. She sampled its splendours, from the white-enamelled bedstead to the standard lamp, with little gasps of delight.

"Tea will be served on the verandah in ten minutes, your ladyship," Crowther

announced, and withdrew.

Whereupon Mata took a step towards the door, and paused. Something seemed to have come upon her of a sudden, out of nowhere, a mantle of thought that enveloped her until she found herself pouring out tea --from the same old pot, into the same comprehensive cup with its three lumps of sugar. Then they talked, talked and listened, each to the beloved voice of the other, until Crowther consulted his watch.

"Time!" he called. "I've had you for the first hour, my lady. More than my share.

What about him?"

"Him?" Mata looked up in frank per-

plexity.
"Thought that would fetch you," beamed

Crowther.

"More surprises?" she questioned.

For answer, he took her by the arm, across the compound to Owen's quarters, and, thrusting her gently inside, closed the door.

Then he went down to the beach, and walked and walked until he came to the scene of the wreck, where he sat staring into

the depths.

There was nothing he desired so much as solitude during that hour, yet presently he became aware of a figure flitting swiftly along the beach. It wore a faded blue wrapper, and its hair streamed in the wind. It sank at Crowther's side.

"Uncle," it panted, "help me!"

"All I can," said Crowther, "but it's quite simple. He's the best overseer I ever had. He gets more out of Rahiti in six months than I used to in a year, and it's about my turn for the 'outside.' I'm going to live with a capital L. I'm going to-

Mata was not listening, or failed to under-

stand.

"He made a mistake," she said dully, " a terrible, terrible mistake."

"Impossible," said Crowther. "I'm certain he never made a mistake in his life.'

"He did," Mata persisted. "Oh, uncle, if you laugh at me, I think I shall die. We

" At a friend's house during the holidays,"

prompted Crowther.

"And he thought—I don't know what he thought, but I never gave him any cause to

think it.'

"You'd better cut that part out," advised Crowther. "He had some difficulty over it himself. He polished it off in the end by telling me that he loved you. Why not try that way, Mata?"

Mata sighed.

"Did he tell you that I loved him?"
"No, but——"

"Well, then-" said Mata.

Crowther turned slowly and looked at her. "You see," she went on, staring out to

"there happens to be someone else." "That's unfortunate," admitted Crow-

ther, "but he can be imported by the next schooner."

"He doesn't need importing," said Mata, her eyes still turned towards the crimsoning horizon.

There was silence for a space.

"I tell you what it is, little girl," said Crowther unsteadily. "We'd better defeat all these complications by marrying each other. Not such a bad idea when you come to think of it, eh?"

Mata looked at him with the eyes of

understanding.

"Then you have come to think of it," she said, "without-without the laugh?"

A FREEHOLD.

THERE'S a little corner of earth In the crook of a beechwood's knee. That little corner is worth All the rest of the world to me; The woods stand warm behind it, The field slopes open below. Three winds of the weald find it. And my heart sings as they blow.

Every blade of grass, Every stick and stone, The little live creatures that pass. Are mine, my very own: The soil of it, every grain, Each bud of its weeds that twine, Every drop of its rain-These are mine as my blood is mine.

A beautiful house stands there. Jasmined, radiant with roses: Its wide clear windows flare In the gold the sunset discloses. In dreams I climb to its door, Dear home that my dreams are gilding . . . Ah, the land is mine, but no more: I have no money for building!

E. NESBIT.

THE PLAIN SISTER

By RALPH COBINO

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM HATHERELL

EVERNE and his friend Neville Cox had a table set in an alcove, with a view of the crowded restaurant beyond. Stringed instruments made a background for the continual sound of talk and laughter. Jewels and silks gleamed under the many lights. Colour and movement-Severne looked at it all, then deliberately closed his eyes.

"I'm dreaming of gardens," he said to "Think of the early morning, when the dew's on the grass, and the wind stirring

the leaves of the trees to music."

Cox smiled across the table. Severne was an artist of some repute, and his friends

suffered his moods gladly.

"I'm obsessed with the thought of gardens to-night," Severne went on. "It's a revulsion from this kind of thing." His gesture indicated not only the crowded restaurant, but the thronging thoroughfare beyond. "I've had a surfeit of town. What folly to tie myself down to a city studio! I'm starved for the sight of an old-world garden and the sound of running water."

Cox nodded sympathetically. Severne and cities were antagonistic. They spoke

different languages.

"I tell you what," Cox said suddenly, "you ought to go down and spend the summer at a little place I know in the South, called Barstow. I once knew it pretty well -some old friends of my mother's live near They've a house and garden that would make you sit up with delight. Wait a minute. I've a letter from my mother here." Cox hunted through a packet of letters, found the one he wanted, and began to read aloud:

"'You remember the Hampsons of Barstow? Mr. Hampson died last autumn. His widow is left very badly off. Of course the house is her own property. You remember the charming old place? I believe she has the idea of taking paying guests to eke out her minute income. If you know

anyone who wouldn't object to being buried alive for the sake of an Arcadian setting, you might send them to Willow House for a holiday.'"

Severne moved his chair so that his back was turned to the crowded restaurant. He dismissed it as a wearisome adjunct.

"Describe the place," he said abruptly. Cox shrugged his inability to paint word

pictures. Urged by Severne, he stumbled over a few sentences that gave the artist a key unlocking the gate into a place of beauty.

"But paying guests-" Severne frowned at the words. "Arcadia spoilt by people who would probably shatter the

peace of it."

"Engage the available rooms for your exclusive use," Cox suggested, laughing.
"Good idea," Severne echoed seriously.
"Anything to keep intruders out. Mrs. Hampson and her family one will have to make the best of. She has a family, I suppose?"

Two daughters. It's years since I saw them. They were school-girls then, in the gawky, growing stage. Their names used to amuse me-Geraldine and Hannah. What a contrast! At the worst there will be only three in family. It's even possible the girls are not living at home now."

"I ought to find quiet, then. The garden sounds large enough for peace and seclusion." Severne scribbled the address on an "I'll write to-night. old envelope. suppose Mrs. Cox will vouch for my respectability, if I mention her name?" He moved his shoulders as if to rid them of a weight. "In a day or two I shall be out of this babel."

"You don't let the grass grow under your feet," Cox laughed. "Wait till you've put the place on canvas. It ought to become a veritable Mecca for you artist fellows."

Severne packed his things with an expedition that matched his sense of distaste for city life. Four days after his talk with Neville Cox he arrived in Barstow. learnt that The Willow House was three miles out from the village, and he decided to walk the distance. The glory of the summer afternoon fell about the far reaches of the valley, and he moved towards them exultantly. Hills were sentinels guarding the jewel of the valley. The river was a voice, an articulate expression of the soul of beauty. Severne's way lay beside it, and he listened as one who understood. three-mile walk led him deep into the heart of the country.

And then abruptly the road rounded a sharp curve, and Severne found himself staring into an old-world garden. All the colours of an artist's palette flamed there, and scent came about him alluringly. From somewhere near running water babbled and. Tentatively and with hesitating pauses a bird began to sing, tried notes, approved them, and gave his melody to the

world.

Severne lifted his eyes to the house—ivycovered, low-windowed, set in the garden as a shrine in the midst of a temple.

"The luck of it," Severne said aloud, " to

chance upon such a place!"

He opened the garden gate and walked up the broad flagged path to the house. The door stood open, and he saw a square-tiled entrance hall. A young woman sat there reading. Her pose was grace in epitome. Severne's critical eye for form and beauty approved her. He felt a sharp prick of astonishment when she lifted her head and he saw that her face was plain.

She pushed her book aside and came towards him. Nearer to her, Severne saw that at least her eyes were beautiful—dark and with the hint of a perpetual question.

" My luggage has probably arrived before me," Severne said. "Your valley tempted me and I fell, hence my late appearance."

"You are Mr. Severne? My mother was beginning to wonder if you had missed the way." She moved towards a doorway, and Severne followed. He exclaimed with pleasure as she opened the door and he saw the room beyond.

"In its way this is as beautiful as the

garden."

A white-haired woman in a widow's cap came across the room to greet him.

smiled at his remark.

"I am glad to welcome a friend of the Coxes," she said. "Neville and his mother are old friends of mine. I hope they made

you understand that we are buried in the heart of the country, and have little or no social life."

"Thank Heaven!" Severne ejaculated.

"I have had a surfeit of that."

Presently a young servant showed him to his room upstairs. His first act amazed her. He strode to the window, studied the view, and voiced approval.

"It's a spring mattress," the girl assured

"An unconsidered trifle," he declared. He heard her gasp as she went out of the

room, and smiled to himself.

The garden lay below him, a medley of colour. Beyond, fields sloped to the willowshrouded river. About the river swallows dipped and swerved, exponents of the art of graceful movement. And always the air was filled with the sound of the running brook, a voice babbling of beauty in the midst of it.

"Four days ago I looked out on city pavements," he pityingly remembered.

At the tea-table Severne studied his hostess and her daughter Hannah. The poise of their manner pleased him. They were in tune with their surroundings. He enthused over the house and garden.

"It accords with the artistic temperament?" Mrs. Hampson smiled at him.

He nodded. "Outside and in, no jarring note."

He caught Hannah's eyes as he spoke. A quick flush of red in her cheeks astonished A moment after divination came to him. him. Her plainness made his speech tact-Yet—he amended to himself—the grace of her movements and the beauty of her eyes redeemed her. The flush on her cheeks was like the lighting of a lamp in which she stood revealed—a woman conscious of her lack of beauty.

Wandering in the garden afterwards, Severne found it as beautiful as his first hopes of it. He came upon a rock garden hidden away, and a pond that received the babbling water of the brook and silenced it. Plum trees climbed the walls, heavy now, with ripening fruit. Hannah was standing on the middle rung of a ladder, gathering some fruit that had already ripened. Severne watched her, the artist in him busy. Her pose was ideal. It reached beauty without effort. She had her back to Severne, and,

Something crunched under his feet, and

standing so, her arms uplifted, there was

she turned her head instantly.

no detail that failed to please him.

"Don't! I was thinking of making a sketch."

The last sentence came as a crude There had been fire in his addition. sharply uttered "Don't!" He saw colour rush into her face again. He had cried out as if her plain face hurt him, broke the picture.

He spoke of the garden, drawing a screen of words about an awkward moment. She helped him instantly to build the screen. She came towards him with her basket of fruit. "Do taste them; they are delicious."

She chatted about the garden, making herself vivacity to cloak his fleeting moment of discomfiture. She was charm—he used the word deliberately—set over against his clumsiness.

"The kitchen garden—you would like to see that?" She smiled up at him. "The running brook makes even that beautiful." She tripped before him, and his artist's eye dwelt on the singular grace and rhythm of her movements.

The face of the little servant appeared for a moment at the kitchen window. Severne saw her staring at Hannah roundeyed and amazed. He had a moment's wonder, as if a faint shade of mystery hung in the air. But soon approval of his companion pushed everything else from his mind. She was made for gardens. Growing things were her friends. She was leading Severne into the intimacy of the gardenthis green member of the family, and that. She quoted under her breath:

> "A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot, Rose plot, Fringed pool, Fern grot . . ."

"Thank Heaven for gardens!" Severne exclaimed.

When darkness fell, Severne sat in the rush-matted sitting-room, chatting to his hostess and her daughter. Their conversation pleased him—a little tang of salt kept it from the insipidity he had known to surfeit. He divined a certain elusive charm about Hannah's personality, and there was a faint suggestion of mystery about her, as if you saw a thin gauze screen, and behind it-Hannah.

That divination of Severne's grew as the weeks passed. Hannah was the elusive spirit of the garden, an invisible presence near him when he was painting. babbling brook, the pond where water-lilies floated, banks of flowers half hidden by a blur of summer rain—she was an invisible

priestess in each temple of beauty. All the mystery and wonder of it had found flesh and had become-Hannah. The fancy pleased him. He laughingly voiced it one day when he was showing her some sketches.

She was bending over them, and for a moment was silent. Then she shook her head, smiled up at him, and said-

"I am not the spirit of the garden. Geraldine is that."

Geraldine! The name meant nothing to him.

"My sister. She is coming home to-day. When you see her, you will understand that all the beauty of the garden is—Geraldine."

She put the sketches carefully together and gave them back to him.
"I must go and see that her room is

ready."

She went a little way up the path, then came back to Severne's side.

"Will you gather flowers for me? want roses for Geraldine's room."

Severne, busy amongst the rose trees, had a passing feeling of dismay that their little circle was to be enlarged, broken. Of course he had known that there was another sister, but he disliked the idea of any other personality than Hannah's in the garden. Geraldine! He laughed a little over the name. Hannah! Geraldine! The quaint old fashion of the one, the hint of stateliness about the other.

He took the flowers into the house, then went up to his room, leant his sketches against the wall, and stepped back, studying them. They were good. He nodded approvingly. He had caught the charm of this garden. And to the seeing eye, to the understanding soul, was there not that hint of an unseen presence, as if the Spirit of all Beauty dwelt close at hand?

The supper bell rang. Severne pushed his sketches into a drawer and went downstairs.

There was a little hum of voices behind the closed door of the sitting-room. Λ voice, strange to Severne, lifted itself above the others, laughing musically. The other sister, of course. Bother her! He stepped into the room.

And he said to himself: "The luck of it! A wonderful garden, and now this beautiful woman. I have come into an artist's paradise.

During supper Severne's mind was working eagerly, placing Geraldine here, there, in the garden. A day of wind, and this woman with hair blown from her face, and whirling



"Geraldine stood face to the sun whilst Severne painted."

leaves about her feet. Sunrise, and her face turned to it expectantly. He thought out dozens of backgrounds for her beauty. He would stand her in the rays of the sun and show her exquisite.

She was vivacious. He began to realise that she was not merely a carved statue

of perfection. She had wit and a nimble tongue.

Outside in the garden rain had commenced to fall. The quick patter on the leaves was a low accompaniment to the voices in the room, as if other voices, a little remote, whispered together. "It's too wet to go out again," Mrs.

Hampson said.

. "And dusk is coming." Hannah spoke from the end of the table, that was already half in shadow. Severne thought he had never heard her voice more musical. He frowned at the thought as it was born. Hannah's voice had

caught his attention because—he remembered now—it was the first time she had spoken since he came into the room.

Geraldine was musical. She sat at the piano, playing, singing. Her fingers and her voice alike showed training. The only light came from the candles against the music-



"Hannah sat there out of the sunlight, watching Severne paint."

stand, so that Geraldine's face was separated from the dusk — illumined. Somewhere in the darkness of the room Hannah sat, a mere blurred shadow.

"Shall we ring for the lamp?" Mrs.

Hampson asked.

Severne was rising to ring, when Hannah

"Why have more light?" She added: "Geraldine likes singing to us in the dusk."

Severne sat down again. There was a note of entreaty in Hannah's voice. She

seemed to plead for shadows.

Alone in his room that night, Severne opened his window wide and leant out, looking at the garden. The moon showed it in a new dress, dainty and ethereal. Down by the river he saw the swaying mass of willow trees like grey smoke above the The voice of the brook was like a thread of laughter running through the stillness.

How quiet Hannah was to-night! Silence and the shadows, and behind them — Hannah. She had retreated. She was behind the shadows, a withdrawn personality. She had spoken once only since supper, pleading for darkness. And Severne had felt grateful to her, since it left Geraldine's face like a star showing from surrounding gloom.

Geraldine took her place as the centre of the household in the weeks that followed. She dominated the whole atmosphere. She was a queen returning to her rightful throne. Severne, in a flash of intuition, knew why, on the night of his arrival, he had surprised a look of amazement on the face of the little She saw Hannah vivacious, altogether charming, and the eyes of the household had been used only to the bright light of Geraldine's brilliance. In Geraldine's absence Hannah had held aloft her own small light. Now she held it lowered, almost She was a foil to the other's beauty.

At Mrs. Hampson's request, Severne painted Geraldine's portrait. As the days passed, the household watched her beauty growing on his canvas till it glowed like a jewel on a faultless background. She slipped into a desired pose as easily as she slipped into a familiar garment. She showed as faultless as a marble statue set against a background of green.lawn.

And at night, when shadows fell, she sang whilst the others listened. Through the open window of the sitting-room the garden showed a vague outline, with the trees like sentinels about the house. The candles

against the music-stand set Geraldine apart, as footlights an artiste on the stage, whilst from the shadows the others listened and watched.

In the daytime Hannah moved about the garden, tending the growing things as a mother her children. Severne found her one day gathering flowers for the house, touching each bloom with a gesture that was a caress. She looked up at him over the burden of beauty her arms held.

"They must have robbed a rainbow of its colours," she said, smiling at him. "But the brook, too, is a robber." She pointed to the diamond flash of running water where the sun kissed it. "There are stars fallen from heaven and kept prisoners."

All about them the air was murmurous with bees. Rustling leaves, running water, bird songs—the garden held music as a cathedral its organ. Severne and Hannah stood and listened as if the garden whispered its secret into their ears.

They heard Geraldine's steps on the path, and Severne held out his hands for the

flowers.

"Shall I sketch her holding these, with

just this background?"

Hannah gave him the flowers. Presently Geraldine stood face to the sun whilst There was a summer-Severne painted. house against the rockery, shadowed with a heavy growth of ivy. Hannah sat there out of the sunlight, watching Severne paint. Severne, glancing back for a moment, saw just the grey shadow of her skirt.

When at last the light failed, Geraldine moved as if to look over Severne's shoulder.

"May I see it?"

" Not this one. It's a failure."

" A failure!" She was interested. "Isn't it---" She hesitated.

"The sun was too strong, dazzling my

eyes."

She stepped back a little. The poise of her head showed her conscious that no light could ever show her lacking beauty. She could face the searching eyes of the sun and feel no shame.

Severne gathered his things together. He glanced up at the sky.

"There's a storm coming."

Raindrops had commenced to patter on the path. They played musically on the leaves, a miniature orchestra. Geraldine gathered up her skirts and fled into the house.

Severne stepped to the summer-house and peered at the grey figure sitting there.

"May I shelter?" He stepped inside, carrying his easel. "How dark it is!"

The rain was noisily beating a tattoo on the roof, as if the souls of all the flowers had turned into elves and danced there. Hannah drew a little further into her shadowed corner.

Severne said: "What a summer this has been! Your garden is the kind of place one had only dreamt of. Do you remember the evening I arrived here?"

"Yes, I remember."

"You showed me the garden. In town I had been hungering for just such a place. When Neville Cox told me of it, we were dining in a restaurant. An orchestra played the latest ragtime. Gilt and tinsel hit the eye wherever it turned, tawdry and artificial. I closed my eyes and dreamt of gardens in the cool of a summer's evening. And then Neville told me of this paradise."

Falling raindrops filled a pause, hushing presently as if there must be silence all

about the summer-house.

"The incredible luck of it is that I have found a woman who embodies in herself the soul of the place. She is the garden, the

essence of it."

"You feel that? I have always felt it." Hannah's voice lifted above the noise of dancing raindrops. "When Geraldine moves about the garden paths, I always fancy the nodding heads of the flowers bend to do her homage. Heaven set her in the right place when it set her here."

Severne watched her as she spoke. Windstirred ivy leaves flung moving shadows over her, now veiling, now revealing. He remembered the night of Geraldine's return, when Hannah seemed to withdraw herself. Stillness and the shadows, and behind them—Hannah. He looked through the open door of the summer-house and saw the garden veiled by the mist of falling rain. He pointed to this screen.

"Because I am bold enough to talk with the spirit of the garden, Nature shuts me off in a secret place, sacred from other eyes."

He heard her stir in her seat, and put out

a hand to silence her.

"Soul of the garden—did you think anyone save yourself could be that?"

He was close enough to feel a sudden tremor of her body. She put her hands quickly to her face as if to hide it, but he caught them, thwarting them in their endeavour.

"I the spirit of the garden, with my plain face? No, no, you are mistaken! I am

only-only the plain sister."

Plain! He tossed the word aside, laughed at it. She was the woman he had dreamt of and never hoped to find. She was the essence of things exquisite. She was the spirit that his spirit had sought and found at last.

She lifted her eyes, meeting his. Plain? Say you saw sunrise on a mountain top, say you stood outside a church and saw the stained windows blurred and dim until the lamps were lighted, showing the windows in a sudden glory. Say you saw Hannah, her face illumined by joy. . . .

* * * * *

The storm passed, and Geraldine came down the garden path. She peeped into the summer-house.

"Tea is ready. We are waiting," she called.

The plain sister lifted her eyes and looked at the beauty before her. For the first time in her life physical loveliness seemed of no account—silver when she herself had gold.

Severne led the plain sister up the garden path to the house. The bowed heads of the flowers did her homage. The sun burst from sheltering clouds and shone on them with insistence. Hannah walked with head erect, unabashed. Severne's love had killed for ever her fear of light.



THE TIGER-SKIN

By PHILIPPA SOUTHCOMBE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

ITH the length of the tiger-skin rug between them, they faced one another in the firelight.

"You don't remember me?" said the

man gravely.

The girl, still holding his card between her fingers, looked at him with a smile.

"But I do," she said simply. "Quite well. Why not? It—it is not so very long ago."

"Four years," he told her, still in that grave, reflective voice. "Four years. I have

not been in England for three."

She nodded without speaking. Even in the uncertain light of the hastily-kindled fire of green wood it was quite palpable that this was a man of no stay-at-home calling; each line of his weathered countenance, something even in the tone of his voice and the decision of his movements, proclaimed in some intangible way his connection with those who go down to the sea in ships, despite the certainly unnautical appearance of his smart hunting kit, generously splashed from head to foot with West Country mud.

"I'm spending my leave at Craycombe," he went on. "I came down last week, so this was only my second day with the hounds. We had a jolly good run until the mist rolled up and stopped us. Then, of course, Pierrot chose a ditch twelve miles from home to pitch into. Hadn't the faintest notion where I was—these lanes seem to go on for ever. Then I ran across your brother, and he very kindly brought me here."

He looked at her as he spoke, and saw her glance again at the white slip of pasteboard bearing the inscription—

Commander OLIVER SETON, R.N.

It would almost seem as if she had been but half listening to his explanation—an impression accentuated by the equally apparent fact that he, for his part, had been talking rather to fill the silence than to extenuate his presence, for it was quite obvious that his thoughts were not concerned with what he said.

After a pause, "Derek will be back from the stables soon. Won't you sit down?" she said quietly, and seated herself in the high-backed chair that stood on the opposite side of the hearth to that she indicated to him. Beyond those two chairs, and the magnificent tiger-skin at their feet, there was, in fact, little else in the great square hall; even the windows, low and diamondpaned, were uncurtained. Soughing rhododendron boughs beat against them in the rising wind, and a sharp patter of hail made the girl glance at her visitor with a faint smile. "It is fortunate that Derek met you. At least we can give you shelter."

The words themselves were simple and ordinary enough. It must have been some odd tension in the atmosphere that lent significance to every sentence spoken by this slim girl with the quiet voice and deepset hazel eyes. To Oliver Seton, trained to watchfulness, it seemed somehow that she, too, was watching—watching him as if she discounted the element of chance in his presence, despite its apparent obviousness.

She sat very still in the high-backed chair. Against the black oak the pale oval of her face was poised on its long throat like a flower. But Oliver Seton was looking at the fine and slender hands that rested on the chair arm—looking at them with an odd expression, as if he tried to capture an elusive memory.

Neither had spoken again when the sound of an opening door snapped the tension of silence, and Seton's host came in. A tall man, with a carelessly good-humoured face, Derek Vane was some twelve years his sister's senior, and he certainly atoned for any lack of geniality in the latter's welcome. He came over to the fire and stood with his arm on the mantel, looking down at the man and the girl with an expression of cheerful satisfaction. He was, it appeared, quite unaffectedly glad that this particular guest should partake of his hospitality, and

he did not seem to notice the girl's failure

to second his enthusiasm.

"You ought to have been out to-day, Adèle," he said in his cheerful, lazy voice. "It was a great run—until the mist spoilt things. You know that covert at the top of Fern Hill? Well, the fox broke this side—"

He was using the toe of his riding-boot on the hearth to explain the position, and as he spoke he kicked aside the edge of the tiger-skin rug. It was so commonplace an action that Oliver Seton would certainly not have given it a thought had he not happened to have been looking, not at his host's demonstrations, but at Adèle Vane, as she sat, slim and straight and still, in the high-backed chair. As her brother kicked the rug aside, he saw her give a little start, and the colour leave her face very white, to return in a flood of rose as his eyes met hers and she realised that he had been watching her.

He looked away hurriedly, and Adèle leant forward, as if the illustration of the exact point where the fox broke covert were of paramount importance in the

world.

Only Seton noticed that the hands that had been resting lightly on the chair arm were now clasped together in her lap.

And somehow the incident did not pass from his mind as the conversation drifted into other channels. They spoke presently of Seton's promotion, of which his host had not heard. It was Derek Vane himself who recalled the name of the ship on which Seton had served as a lieutenant.

"There was another fellow we knew who served aboard her," he remarked, after a pause. "Brownlow his name was—Lieutenant Brownlow. I should think he must have been shipmates with you. Did you know him?"

"Maurice Brownlow?" asked Seton

slowly.

"That's the fellow. We—lost sight of him a couple of years ago. You knew him?"

"Yes, I knew him."

There was a brief pause, broken only by the hiss and snap of the burning wood and the lash of the storm without. Derek Vane reached for his pipe and began to fill it.

"That's interesting," he said, still in that casual voice of his. Then: "Where is he now? We've often wondered. Was he—killed?"

Seton never knew what made him look

at Adèle Vane as her brother spoke. Instinctively, it seemed, he was conscious that whatever his reply might mean to the latter, it was the girl who waited—breathlessly. Yet he paused before replying, and when he spoke his voice was oddly hard.

"Yes, he was killed—in that scrap in

Desperately he looked away from Adèle's white face, conscious that he did not want to see its expression.

"You are quite sure?"

He had to look at her then, had to meet the steadiness of those hazel eyes.

"Quite sure," he said deliberately.

"Poor beggar!" It was his host's voice, still casually, but none the less sincerely, compassionate. "Poor beggar! I'm sorry. But we were—afraid of that. We hadn't heard for so long—not since he sent us this, in fact." He indicated the great tiger-skin at their feet. "Fine skin, isn't it? Brownlow shot the beast himself. Spent a fortnight's leave in Ceylon with some relative or other—a commissioner, I think he was—who'd promised him some sport, and had the luck to bag this himself. He made us a present of it."

Seton followed his glance without speaking. Indubitably the trophy of poor Brownlow's sport was a magnificent specimen, with the perfection of its black-barred and golden-brown marking, thick and glossy fur, and great handsome head. The latter was turned towards Adèle's side of the hearth, and as her brother spoke he bent down and lifted it between his two hands, that Seton might see it to better advantage.

"Absolute corker, isn't he? Seems almost a shame to make a hearth-rug of

him, with a head like that. . ."

He let the great head slip back to the floor; it struck the stone with a dull thud, and Adèle gave a half-stifled cry that made both men glance at her in surprise.

"It's nothing!" Somehow now her little nervous laugh was oddly unconvincing. "Only I thought—it might have got damaged, falling like that. And—and it

is such a beauty."

"It's the finest I've seen," said Seton gravely. "Must be worth a good deal. Brownlow was a good shot. . . Talking of shooting, did you ever come across that fellow Dashwood?"

As he quietly piloted the conversation away from the subject of Brownlow and his trophy, he did not look at Adèle. She was, perhaps, dimly aware of the impulse that

in those charming deep-set eyes of hers

would have made him surer than ever,

had prompted his words—for he was rather a tacitum person, and far from being a raconteur—and the little flash of gratitude

had he seen it, that his conjectures were merited. All that evening, while the storm beat on the windows of the old, quiet house, Oliver Seton found those conjectures of engrossing interest. All that night, when the storm had worn itself out and fitful gleams of moonlight 'crossed the dark ridge of hills that rimmed around the place, he saw the image of Adèle Vane as she had looked that evening in the high-backed chair in the firelight, with the tiger-skin at her feet, and he knew that, whatever the outcome of the trick of Fate that had brought about this encounter, it was an image that would endure for always. When dawn came, clear and still and rain-washed, there were

"Seton followed his glance without speaking.

two things about which Oliver Seton had quite made up his mind.

He had found Adèle on the porch, looking out at the distant glimpse of ruffled and

hazy sea. In the strong light of morning the old house looked barer and shabbier than ever.

Somehow it seemed a strangely congruous setting for Adèle, white and sleepless-eyed, as she stood there in the glory of the March

Oliver Seton said very quietly: "I wanted to speak to you. It is—important."

She looked at him, then, without speaking, turned and led the way down a flagged path that ended in a wooden seat under a weeping cherry tree. It was an early season, and already the dipping branches showed here and there a tassel of pearl-white flower-bud and bronze young leaf. Through a gap in



'Absolute corker, isn't he?'"

the distant brown gorse-patched hills flashed a glimpse of the sea. A box hedge hid the old house.

"We shall not be interrupted here,"

said Adèle.

There was a long pause—so long that, when it was broken by Adèle's voice again, this time very steady and cold and clear, Seton made an involuntary movement of relief.

"It is about—Maurice?"

He looked at her quickly.

" Yes."

"A—a message?"

"No, not a message,"

She waited. Looking at her as she stood there, he had an absurd, fantastic feeling that she would have waited like that—for him to speak—indefinitely. He wanted to break the spell of her white, still imperturbability.

"Last night," he said quietly, "I did not tell you the truth when I said that Maurice Brownlow was killed. I had a reason for saying it—I think you will understand. But it is not true. He is alive—now."

And then she asked the question that of all others he had dreaded, but that he knew to be inevitable.

" Where ? "

"That I can't tell you. I don't know."

"Then—tell me what you do know."
There was command as well as appeal in her voice, in the eyes she kept unflinchingly

on his. Perhaps Oliver Seton was obeying both as he answered her.

"Brownlow is undergoing sentence for having stolen and sold the plans of a new gun to a hostile Power just before the end of the War."

Just so bluntly and curtly he dealt the blow, judging her by a new and rather fine standard of courage. After a pause she asked rather an odd question—

"You—you meant to tell me the truth—

all the time?"

He gave her a quick look.

" Yes."

"It was because of Derek that you said—what you did—last night?"

" Partly."

She drew a long breath.

"You knew that if Derek believed Maurice killed, he—he would be sorry; but if he knew him to be a traitor and a thief——" She broke off. But somehow, it seemed, it was not the application of those stark epithets of disgrace to Maurice Brownlow that shook her voice. Suddenly she

flung out her hands in a little gesture of

appeal

"Oh, I don't know what you really know, and what you've just guessed!" she cried. "I don't know what Derek's told you—I don't even know if it was really chance that brought you here at all..."

"It was chance," he said quietly—" on

my honour."

There was a long pause. Then Adèle said dully: "Last night I was—afraid."

"I know."

"Ah!" She looked at him again. "Did you know why?"

" No."

"It was because, though I did not know that—he—was a traitor, I did know he was a—thief."

He looked at her in amazement. Her face was as white as the cherry flower above it.

"I thought that was why you had come." He said slowly and heavily, "Do you mean that you knew he had stolen the plans?" and saw the colour flood into her face at his words.

"You think I could have forgiven him

that ?´

He said nothing. For a long moment they looked at one another steadily. But it seemed that Adèle's hazel eyes, searching Oliver Seton's face line for line, read there some answer.

"Come back to the house," she said

with an odd abruptness.

He followed her to the big bare hall, that looked so much bigger and barer in the relentless morning light streaming in at the uncurtained window. The grey wood ashes of last night's fire still lay on the hearth; somehow Brownlow's tiger-skin looked more

barbarically magnificent than ever.

Adèle Vane dropped on her knees beside it, lifting the heavy head as her brother had done the night before. The big glass eyes were uncannily lifelike as they caught the amber sunlight. Seton, watching the girl with a sort of spellbound fascination, saw her fingers close over them. There was a faint click, and a second later she was holding out her hand to him. It was quite steady, and in the hollow of the palm lay two very fine black pearls.

He gave an involuntary exclamation. Perhaps before she spoke, some suspicion of the truth had flashed across his mind, prompted by the memory of her words.

"That is how I know that he is a thief," she said. "This is why I was—afraid last night, when Derek told you who had shot

And when he let it slip on the floor, this. I thought the jar might loosen the spring, for that was how I found it out only the other day." She paused, and for the first time Seton, glancing from her to the tiger's head, was aware of the ingenious hidingplace from which she had taken the pearls.

"It was clever, wasn't it?" she said, with a little bitter smile. "No one would think of looking for famous jewels behind the glass eyes of a tiger-skin. It was only the merest chance that I found out myself. I suppose that he meant to come back—he thought they'd be safe here." Suddenly her

voice quivered and broke.

Seton said very quietly, after a long

"But how did you guess that they were

-stolen?"

She looked up at him.

"Didn't you ever hear of the disappearance of the Van Horne pearls? It was at a big semi-official ball in Colombo. They called it a complete mystery. There wasn't the slightest clue. I—I happen to know that Maurice was there. It was just after he had returned from his visit up-country and his shooting trip. Two months afterwards he sent us this."

"And all the time—last night—you thought I had come because of that?"

He knew now why it was that that image of her had been so haunting.

" Yes."

"Derek doesn't know?" he asked her.
"No." She paused. "He—he never liked Maurice, I think. He distrusted him. That was why he—didn't want me to marry him."

"Yes," said Seton quite gravely and curtly. "But that was not all the reason?"

For a half second he saw the set tragedy of her face crossed by a new expression. She said in an odd, still, little voice-

"No. He was poor." And then, defiantly: "As poor as we are."

His glance, arrested in its involuntary circuit of the shabby room, came back very gently to the slim kneeling figure on the hearth. Adèle still held the pearls in her hand; the glass eyes in the tiger's head looked as inscrutable as Buddha's, betraying no hint of the secret they had guarded.

The girl rose to her feet.

"If you would take care of them-until they can be restored to their owner."

Suddenly she looked at him.

"Derek need-never-know?" "No, not if we can help it."

She drew a long breath; for a moment the face she turned to him held only the frankest gratitude. "Ah, you understand, just as you understood last night-She broke off suddenly.

After a long pause Seton spoke gravely

and evenly.

"I'm going to see this thing throughfor you. It—it may take time. afterwards I shall come back, Adèle."

But at his words and the deepening of his voice as he spoke her name, Adèle gave a

sharp and passionate cry.

"Ah, not that not that!" He said, his quiet eyes steadily on hers-

"I thought I did understand. But, after all, there is something else. Tell me."

Just for a moment she hesitated, then she

faced him, defiant.

"I will tell you," she said desperately. "At least, then, you'll understand. This time it may have been chance that brought you here, but it's a chance that Derek's been building on ever since—four years ago. It's-it's just the brutal truth. Maurice was poor; you are-not. Maurice is-out of the way. . . . "

Her voice trailed into silence.

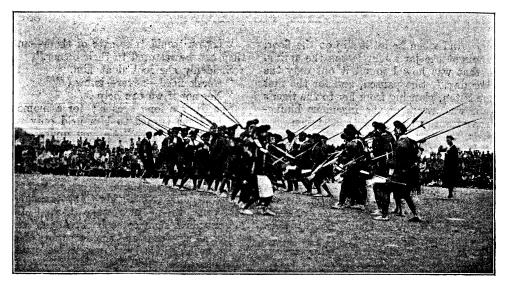
"Do you know," said Seton quietly, "that I guessed something of that last night? That was why I told your brother that Brownlow was killed instead ofdisgraced. I thought it might make it easier for you." He paused a moment, and his face, as he watched her, was suddenly the face of a man who watches the balance of all that matters most in the world.

"You still care for Maurice?" he said. Startled by the abruptness of the question, she lifted her head and met his eyes. It was the image of the night before, gallant and defiant and irresistibly charming, and somehow, in spite of herself, answering his question.

Into the pause that followed came the sound of Derek's whistle and approaching footsteps. Oliver Seton held out his hand, looking down at Adèle's uplifted face.

"It won't be chance next time," he said

quietly.



THE WAR DANCE OF THE AO TRIBE.

MOTHER OF WATERS

THE HILL COUNTRY OF THE NAGAS

By CAPTAIN F. KINGDON WARD, F.R.G.S.

ITH the Englishman's contempt for that vast array of finer distinctions in sound which our vocal chords were not made to utter, nor his ears to discriminate, let us call it Japvo, and leave it at that. The Nagas call it something else, not very similar—though capable of corruption—meaning "Mother of Waters"; but the Englishman cannot readily get his tongue to it—such is the lack of co-ordination between ear and tongue—and, after all, what does it matter? So Japvo it has remained.

Japvo, be it noted—and it is so marked on the survey sheet—is the highest peak in the Naga Hills, a long, narrow hogsback summit of sandstone, with slab sides rising sheer from the tangled jungle.

The Eastern Bengal Railway carried me in comfort—save for the infernal heat of the plains in May—to the Brahmaputra crossing; but after that I was handed over to the crudities of the Assam-Bengal line, and

fell asleep at midnight, to be awakened an hour later by a sleepy porter crying "Manipur Road." Starting up just in time, I tumbled out on to the deserted platform of a little wayside station. A tropic downpour was rattling on the mailed leaves of the palms, and the sky was black as ink. It was with difficulty that I resurrected from slumber two coolies, who carried my kit across to the bungalow hard by.

At dawn I was awakened by the hoot of gibbons, and within an hour the jungle was giving full throat. It was a fine, sunny day, the water seeping from the rice-fields into the already saturated atmosphere, making it like a Turkish bath. My eyes turned with longing to the distant Naga Hills, indigoblue through the trees. Hiring a Manipuri bullock-cart to carry my things, I set out on foot for Kohima, fifty miles distant, just as the sun turned westwards. Half an hour later I was across the river and in the jungle.

There is a narrow but excellent motor

road from the railway to Manipur, a distance of one hundred and twenty miles, with comfortable rest-houses every ten or twelve miles. By marching at night, and doing double stages, Kohima—nearly half-way—

is easily reached in three days.

Ten miles across flat paddy-land brings us to the foot of the hills, where the river debouches on to the plains from a picturesque gorge. Here the road has been hewn out of the cliff. Beyond the gorge the hills are everywhere clothed with virgin forest, and the tinkle of falling water is heard on every hand. Up, up, up climbs the road, swinging round the hill-side, dipping down into dark gullies walled with primeval jungle, crossing valleys and turning spurs. Gradually the forest changes. Finally comes

village ten miles up the road to Manipur. From here the climb was reckoned to take two days. I spent the night in the bachelors' room. A long bench about five feet wide, raised on piles, ran the length of this hut; there was nothing else. On this my bedding was spread, and even the liberal shower of disinfectant powder I let fall did not suffice to keep at bay the troops which lurked in -that bench! The bachelors, dispossessed, slept serenely elsewhere, and left me to my own devices; the disinfectant completely bewildered them! Was it a magic rite? Next morning I was the centre of a crowd of curious semi-naked Angami Nagas, women and children, young men and maidens, all complete strangers to water for washing purposes. Rain was falling, as



A NAGA VILLAGE.

the long twelve-mile ascent of the Kohima Valley to the topmost ridge, and beyond that the saddle drops steeply away into the blueness of the Manipur plain and the marble-clouded mountains beyond.

Kohima, five thousand feet above silt-level, is planted with a goodly variety of temperate trees. To the bazaar—a single street—come every morning Nagas from the surrounding hill villages. They are wild and picturesque, but harmless; the head-hunters dwell outside the administered tract. In fine weather the summit of Japvo is visible; westwards there is a fine view over the Assam Valley to the Duars, and beyond them, in winter, to the Bhutan Himalaya.

It needed but a few days, with the help of the Deputy Commissioner, to collect the necessary men for an ascent of Japvo, having accomplished which we set out for a Naga usual, but we secured porters and an advance-party to clear the track, which was quite overgrown, and about noon we ourselves started.

An abrupt ascent from the road brought us out on to a spur, which we followed up into the jungle. The path was here precipitous and slippery with mud, so that we must needs haul ourselves up by roots and hanging creepers. At last we reached a tiny clearing, and though it was early yet, the guides called a halt. We might go no farther, for this was the only spot at which water was obtainable.

Followed an uncomfortable night of storm, and dawn was ushered in with heavy rain. Leaving the camp standing, we pushed on up the steep path, slipping at every step. At last we reached the rocks, and the worst was over. The giant forest trees, too, were



A NAGA WARRIOR.

disappearing; instead, there were masses of rhododendron in bloom. Higher yet we found the rocks covered with filmy ferns, like moss, and tanglewood replaced the giant trees. Quite suddenly we emerged on to the broken ridge. A wall faced us, and was scaled with difficulty. We stood on the summit of Japvo, the world at our feet!

In front of us was the narrow ridge, cut off on one side in sheer precipices. Gnarled rhododendrons, short bamboo, holly, barberry, and other stiff bushes clothed the rocks, and from the end of the ridge we could look right down on to the Kohima Valley. As we stood there in the wet drizzle, stung by the uprushing wind, the veil was marvellously rent aside for a moment, and we saw the valley below, silvered with wet rice-fields and the brown Naga villages crowning the spurs, cape beyond cape, to Kohima. The scene closed as quickly and as mysteriously as it had

opened, and all was amorphous whiteness again. Camp was reached in two hours, and, after another wet night, we packed our belongings and returned to the valley. It was useless in such weather to attempt the elephant valley, as it is called, on the other side of Japvo. This valley is the traditional home of a herd of these beasts, who, hunted by men, built themselves a stairway up a steep watercourse, and reached an upper valley. In the night, water rushing down, destroyed the ladder, thus trapping the elephants, who have resided there ever since. Thus legend; and there is, of course, mention of a white elephant!

So we returned to Kohima in time to greet the Naga coolies back from France. News had gone forth to the remotest villages, three and four weeks' march distant, that they might send in their warriors to welcome home the men from the War. And they came, these splendid naked savages—Angami, Ao, Lotha, Sema—dressed in full war-paint, each according to his tribe. Clothes they had none, save cane helmets and stiff aprons encrusted with cowry shells. Tall hornbill feathers riding jauntily in the



ANOTHER NAGA TYPE.

headdress added to their apparent stature, and they carried tails of horsehair, dyed scarlet, behind. Their shields were of black bear's hide, and their spears were three yards long. They were armed with daos, too-short, savage knives stuck in a wooden slot carried round the waist. On their legs and arms were thick brass rings and wide bracelets; a blow from such an one must have felled a man to earth. Tigers' teeth and other trophies of the chase were prominent ornaments on many. They walked majestically with a wild, savage grace, and not a few of them had taken heads in the bad old days. One grand young man of the Ao, a chieftain with the step of panther, had fled from the unadministered the Nagas, for years to come. But of the Great War itself they could tell little, for it transcended everything in their previous experience, and they had no words to express life or death in this fourth dimension. Only they recollected sadly that their ship had been sunk (in the Mediterranean), and they had all lost their daos! They were luckier than the ten little nigger boys, for though one had picked up a live bomb, and another had hit a detonator with a brick in order to make a cigarette-holder, and other like solecisms had been committed, still, very few of those who left the Naga Hills for France had failed to return.

The Chief Commissioner held a durbar on the parade-ground, and all Kohima, together



SEMA NAGA WARRIORS DRAWN UP IN BATTLE ARRAY.

tract and sought refuge under British protection, for he was a great warrior, and had taken many heads, women and children, as the custom is, and was sore afraid for his life.

It was a fine scene, with the jungle-clad mountains all round echoing to the deep-throated roar of the Nagas as they marched up the road from Assam. But how different they looked to the men lining the road! They wore the khaki tunic of the Indian Labour Corps in France, and their hair was cropped. Several of them carried German helmets, trophies which would decorate some remote Naga hut on the fringes of Assam, and remind the people of the Great War, and of the part played by

with the eight hundred returned coolies, gathered to watch the war dances of the warriors. The sun shone out, the clouds rolled back, and Japvo, head and shoulders above the surrounding mountains, looked down on the strange scene. There must have been three thousand people round the square, including the half-dozen Englishmen in Kohima, when the full-throated bellow, a deep haw-w-w of the Angami, announced the beginning. Then a band of warriors broke the ring and entered the arena, and their supporters took up the cry once more till the valley rang with it. Right round the great square they went, stepping in time, flourishing their long spears, their bare feet pattering on the hard earth floor; and all round were the mountains, their heads lost in the clouds, with indigo-coloured valleys on either hand, and more mountains beyond, marbled with white cloud. A breeze rustled the big bamboos, and here and there a paddyfield in the terraced valley caught the sun and shone like silver.

So they danced the fire dance, and then made way for the Ao, whose small warriors made blood-curdling noises, beating their daos against their shields. The comic element was furnished by two of the returned coolies, who took the floor decked in their German helmets, curveting all across the ground, to the intense annoyance of two European dogs. This unrehearsed turn

elicited roars of laughter from the delighted crowd.

Then the weather broke up. After the three hours' sunshine, mist was flying up valley on the wings of the wind, clouds were forming against the cold mountains, and presently the first shower swooped down. Japvo was soon blotted out, other peaks followed, and the crowd began to melt away into the bazaar.

Soon it was raining steadily. The durbar ended, and the coolies, glad to be back from the incomprehensible, dispersed to their temporary lines before being finally paid off and sent to their peaceful villages in the remote Naga Hills.



THE MOON-MAN

AND have you heard the Romany tale,
Sweet and true, sweet and true,
How every night, be it late or soon,
Every night in the silver moon,
A gipsy sits and fiddles a tune,
Sweet and true?

And have you heard his melodies fall,
Sweet and strange, sweet and strange?

None but lovers may hear him play,
None but lovers that softly stray,
Hand-in-hand on the woodland way,
Sweet and strange.

And will you roam the forest with me,

Sweet and dear, sweet and dear?

Through the shadows the moon shines bright,
Through the shadows, oh, come to-night,
We and Love in the singing light,

Sweet and dear!

MAY BYRON.

EAGLE'S EYRIE

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

OFFAT sipped the sherry faintly flavoured with converge commented harshly on the folly of a convention which would not allow him to sit down to dinner in full golfing attire.

"Either," he said, "I am not the man I was, or Cornwall is beastly relaxing. I feel as if I never want to move again. Two rounds

and I'm whacked."

"Both times," Holmby remarked softly.

Moffat grinned.

"I didn't mean whacked in that sense. But I was. Small credit to you, Holmby. That a scratch man like you should receive half a stroke a hole is an injustice crying to Heaven for vengeance. However, at three p.m. to-morrow, as ever was, I will proceed to knock the sawdust out of your loathsome and flabby carcase."

Holmby, hard as nails, one whom the Victorians would have described as "a fine figure of a man," grinned broadly at

the ferocious boast.

"Sorry," he said, " but I have an engagement."

"An engagement, quotha? With whom,

young sir ? "With myself, good gossip. I have vowed to make a pilgrimage. To-day is Thursday. By Monday I must be in Town, or the ancient firm of Lennox and Holmby will be in peril of liquidation. I am no coward, but I cannot face the thought of travelling three hundred and fifty miles on the Sabbath in a train which scorns to profane the day with undue speed. Therefore to-morrow is my last free day, and must be used for the purpose assigned."

A pilgrimage?" said Moffat.

"A private pilgrimage."

"Oh, I'm not curious, but I like you to chat to me. Sitting here listening to you provides me with an excuse for not going up to dress. Am I an exception, or does the Cornish atmosphere make everybody feel like short pieces of chewed string? The aborigines hereabouts seem to live to ripe old ages."

"Yes," Holmby agreed. "They never die, but they never feel very well.'

Moffat laughed indolently. The rumbling of a gong from the hotel vestibule arose and drowned the sound.

"Oh, Heavens," he grunted, "I can't move! Five more minutes. Of course you were brought up in this part of the world,

weren't you?"

"Five miles from here along the coast. As a lonely orphan I used to spend all my holidays with an aunt at a house called Polhydrick. You can see it from the Falmouth Road, a great lonely barracks of a place, with a wretched scrubby garden and great bare fields going down to the cliffs. My aunt died ten years ago, and the house has passed into other hands. I used to think I hated it as a boy."

"And now," said Moffat, "distance has lent enchantment, and you are going back to see the dear old homestead where you used to experience such ideal happiness. Sentiment is the oddest thing in the world. I met a man in Hong-Kong once, and the tears used to come into his eyes whenever

he mentioned Surbiton."

"I shan't bother to see the house," Holmby said. "I don't know who lives there now. Anyhow, I've no illusions of memory about it. I had a perfectly pestilent time there. My aunt, poor old thing, was a maiden lady about sixty years behind her generation. She lived in an atmosphere of closed windows, portrait albums, stuffed plovers, and antimacassars. She objected to everything I did, and kept me short of pocket-money. Heaven rest her, poor old lady, she didn't understand. No, no, Polhydrick is of no interest to me. I am going to make a pilgrimage to the Eagle's Eerie."

The Eagle's what?"

"Eagle's Eerie," said Holmby firmly. "I used to call it that first of all. At twelve my spelling and pronunciation were very indifferent.

"It sounds bracing," Moffat remarked.

"It was a broad ledge of cliff about three-quarters of the way up. There must have been a landslide there at some time, for the rock was covered with earth and grass, and one or two bushes were growing. I had a head for heights as a kid, and I found the place while climbing about the cliffs. What I wanted most in the world about that time was a secret retreat—a place in which to get away from my aunt, and dream my own dreams, and read delightful books about smugglers and Indians which were denied me in the house. I built a sort of shelter there, lowering the wood down from the cliff-head above. The place became a regular storehouse of mine, and I used to spend every available moment there. My aunt didn't know, of course."

Moffat choked slightly. Imaginary pictures of one's best friend as a little boy, unless one knew him as such, are always food for mirth.

"Funny little devil you must have been,"

he commented.

"Rugby knocked some of the oddness out of me," Holmby replied, "but there never was a child yet, brought up in loneliness as I was, who was entirely normal. Heavens, the things I used to dream and imagine, perched up there between the sea and the sky—the things I was going to do when I grew up! The adventures! I was the hero of every book I picked up—except the miserable ones which would have made me die in the end. I never even stopped to wonder how I could cram it all into one crowded life."

"You've managed to have a pretty good time, you old dog," Moffat remarked.

Holmby began slowly and with pre-

occupation to fill a pipe.

"Yes, I've as much money as I want now, I can do most things that I want to do, and at thirty-two one can still call oneself young. But the only real happiness we get in this life is by dreaming of the happiness we're going to have. When we grow older, and don't get it—it somehow slips through our hands like water—we look back upon the dreaming-time as the best."

Moffat, who had about as much imagination as a new brick, tried hard to struggle for a moment into his friend's shoes.

"I think I see. You want to find your old lair—and you'll find it all right, unless there's been another landslide—and spend a morbid hour there, trying to recapture old sensations, which will elude you for the very good reason that you've outgrown them.

You're a morbid brute, Dick. Better play golf instead, and perhaps I'll let you beat me again. Gloating over the past is a form of self-indulgence which you might leave alone for another thirty or forty years. Or are you going to kick your heels over two hundred feet of space and try to pretend once more that you're the Pirate King?"

Holmby shook his head with a smile which barely hid an inclination to throw something hard and heavy at Moffat's head.

"I don't know. I just want to see the place. And I thought, if there should be another boy there—some other youngster might have found the place, you know, and be using it as I did——"

Moffat exploded loudly.

"My dear old thing," he exclaimed, "if there were one there, he'd take you for a lunatic, and be scared to death of your ugly old mug, same as you would have been in his place. He'd be too shy to tell you of his games with imaginary robbers and smugglers, and you'd come away cursing because such a dull, smug little beast was using your old roost. It's no good, Dick. You belong to the grown-ups—them what play golf instead of pirates, and auction instead of tiddlywinks."

Holmby laughed. The vein of cynicism

in Moffat often amused him.

"I know all that. But I've a spare fiver, and I'd like to tip that boy, if he exists. I remember something which you don't, Moffat—the wonderful thing a fiver would have been twenty years ago. It would have put the defences of the Eagle's Eyrie into such good order as to make it impregnable. The books it would have bought! The real Derringers, to be taken out and fired on special occasions! The——"

"The perfectly appalling messes you would have cooked and eaten! And, talking

about food----"

At that moment the humorous head-

waiter appeared in the doorway.

"I don't know whether you gentlemen want any dinner," he remarked, "but if you do——"

Two hundred feet beneath Holmby the sea spread her long white skirts. He heard the crisp seething, as of the wind among reeds, and, as wave upon wave receded, the harsh roar of sand and gravel being dragged back into the ocean bed. But he did not look down. He had tried it and found that it caused him internal discomfort and a queer sensation in the soles of his feet. Time had

been when he had climbed and balanced in a way which curdled his blood to remember.

He could climb upwards; to climb down was impossible. As he struggled on, he had uncomfortable fears lest he should encounter some obstacle not there in his boyhood and find himself stranded between sea and sky. But the character of the cliff, although the years must take an imperceptible toll even of rock, remained the same. He recognised with strange little thrills a boulder here on which it was possible to sit and rest, a familiar foothold there, and once the stump of an old bush, which bore his twelve stone of weight as staunchly as it had once borne his six. And at last, just above his head, he saw the parapet of the great pocket in the cliff-side which he had called the Eagle's

Cautiously he raised a hand and felt for a ledge of rock, a tuft of coarse grass to give him leverage, and as he raised the other, he heard near him and above him a human voice exclaim aloud. It was a boyish soprano which cried out nervously and excitedly:

"What's that? Who's there?"

Holmby was delighted; incidentally, he was a little perturbed by alarming possibilities.

"All right, lad!" he called out. "Don't pipe up all hands to repel boarders. Take the buccaneer aboard and make him prisoner."

"Perhaps I can help you," suggested the

high, boyish soprano after a pause.

He was conscious of somebody bending above him, of hands placed firmly under his arm-pits.

"İt's a bit stiff," said the voice, "until you get used to it."

Slowly Holmby's head rose above the parapet, and one of the shocks of his life was given to him. He nearly let go his hold.

"Holy smoke!" he ejaculated. "It's

a girl!"

He scrambled up, rose to his knees, stood upright and regarded her in amazement. He beheld a dark-eyed olive-skinned maiden of any age between seventeen and twenty. She wore a white sweater, a short blue serge skirt, neat black stockings and dark gymnasium shoes. Her black hair was "up," but arranged in such a way as to indicate inexperience in the making of a coiffure.

Holmby's gaze, fixed upon her, took in details of the background behind her. The "Eyrie" was much the same as ever, albeit to grown-up eyes it looked smaller and less romantic. The same old hardy shrubs waved

their branches in the soft south wind. There was a hut there, too. Not the one he had constructed himself-rain and wind had conspired with Time to obliterate thatbut an amateur makeshift very like his own, which gave a certain amount of shelter, and in which one might imagine comfort, if one were young enough. But a girl to be there ! A girl! For a moment he was vaguely resentful. What had she to do with Indians and smugglers, and the slaying and capturing thereof? Too old, too, for such delightful folly. Probably she came there to gloat over sickly novelettes. Ugh!

His silence and prolonged stare made him

suddenly conscious of rudeness.

"I beg your pardon," he said, with a slight flush, "I thought you were a boy."

"No such luck," remarked the lady, with a certain vivacity. "Why should you have thought that?"

" There used to be a boy here."

"When?" she demanded wonderingly.

"Oh, years and years ago."

"Oh, yes!" she cried out sharply, as if suddenly reminded of something. "Years and years ago there was. But how did you know? Used you to live here once?"

He did not answer her question, but asked another: "How did you know?"

"Oh, when I found this place I saw there had once been a hut here. It was all beaten flat, and the wood was rotten, but I could tell it had been a hut. And I knew it had belonged to a boy because of a few things I found—the wrecks of one or two books and a catapault half buried. The thick

elastic broke all up when I touched it."
"By Jove!" Holmby began to stroke
his upper lip. "That old catty, eh? And the books, eh? What books were they?"

She was laughing now as one laughs over an odd coincidence.

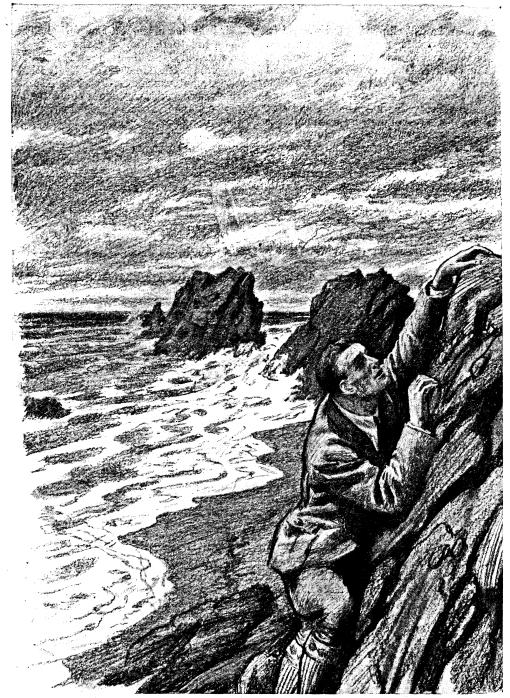
"They were all messy and horrible," she said, "and had animals inside them, so I had to throw them away. One was a Hall and Steven's Euclid, and the other a Greek Delectus. I suppose the boy must have

brought his holiday task here. "Well, I'm---" Holm Holmby broke off short, leaving out the verb. He remembered missing those books when he returned to school for his last term, and had often wondered what had become of them.

"I've often wondered what that boy was like," she continued. "Do tell me about him. Did you know him well?"

"I knew him very well," he answered.

"From what I can remember, he wasn't

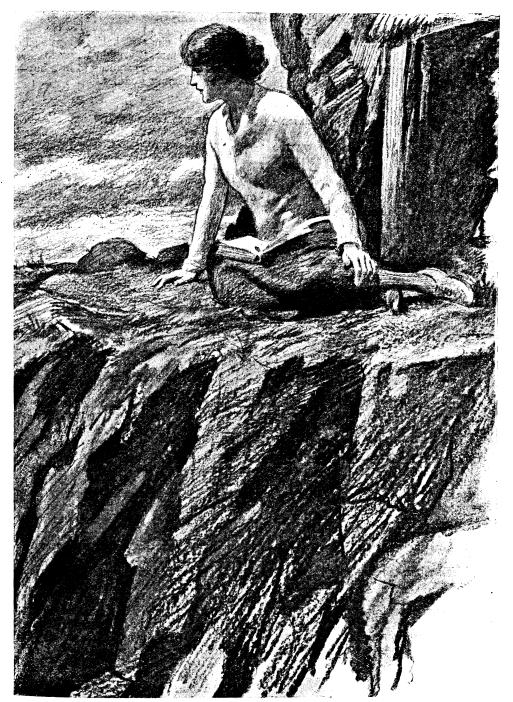


'Cautiously he raised a hand and felt for a ledge of rock, a tuft of coarse grass to give him leverage, 'What's that?

a bad sort of boy, though I say it who shouldn't. It's a pity he didn't know you, but you weren't old enough to be about here then. He was a lonely little soul."

"Was he as lonely as I am?" she asked

impulsively. And then, as enlightenment came to her, she cried out: "Oh, it was you! Oh, no, it couldn't have been you!" He uttered a little laugh.
"He was rather a nice boy, but he grew



and as he raised the other, he heard near him and above him a human voice exclaim aloud. . . Who's there?" $_{I}$

up to be me. Somehow, it doesn't seem to be quite fair, does it?"

She was laughing and excited now. Whatever reserve she would have felt and shown was gone.

"Oh," she cried, "are you really and truly the boy who built the hut—the one before mine? When I was younger I used to think about him so much that I imagined I knew him. Oh, this is really wonderful!

I didn't think you would ever come back. Will you come and see the hut I made? Is it anything like yours? It wouldn't be so good. You can't expect girls to make things like a boy. Oh, no, it can't be true! You can't be Tommy Poddles!"

"I'm not," said Holmby a little resent-

fully.

"Oh, yes, you are, if you are the boy who was here before me. I didn't know his name, so I used to call him that. I thought it was a good name for the sort of boy who would have a catapult."

Holmby snuffed the smoke of some burnt

dream of childhood.

"Did you make up stories about him?"

he asked almost eagerly.
"I? No"—she coloured—"that is,

when I was much younger-"

Holmby was no longer resentful. He was glad with that strange gladness which is not unlike sorrow. Unsuspected chords in his being were responding to strange touches. In some magical way her very presence there blended To-Day with Yesterday.

The hut was larger than the one he had made. There was plenty of room for both of them inside. His gaze took in a pile of books, a work-basket, thin blue flames flickering under a tin kettle perched upon a small spirit stove.

"I can give you some tea," she said, suddenly older in her manner, "if you don't mind drinking out of a tin."

don't mind drinking out of a tin.

He thanked her absently. He was still looking around the crazy little shanty.

"Does anybody ever come here with you?" he asked.

She shook her head

"You made it big enough for two," he added.

The quick colour crept up her face again. "You see," she said, "I was only a child when I made it, and—and I used to pretend that Tommy Poddles might come back."

"I'm afraid he can't," Holmby said.

She glanced at him quickly.

"You don't like to be called Tommy Poddles?" she asked anxiously.

He loathed the name, but saw that it

meant something to her.

"I don't mind a bit," he said, and fell to glancing among her books. Here old friends confronted him: "The Cloister and the Hearth," "Westward Ho!" "The Last of the Mohicans," yellow-backed volumes of Bret Harte, all of which had vielded their delights to him in the same spot nearly twenty years before.

"You see," she said half apologetically, following his gaze, "I ought never to have been a girl. I always wanted to be a boya boy like Tommy Poddles."

III.

HER name was Olive Stirling, and she lived up at Polhydrick with an elderly governess and four elderly servants. Her father was a widower and a great traveller—so great a traveller that he was hardly ever at home. He had bought Polhydrick when it came into the market after the death of Holmby's aunt, with the intention of "settling down" in it. His last letter, now two months old, had borne an Australasian stamp. He disapproved of girls' schools as tending to produce ultra-modern and unwomanly young women. There was not another girl of her age and station within a dozen miles. So much their respective childhoods had in common. In Olive's case her very loneliness had kept her a child beyond her time.

They exchanged histories while the kettle boiled, and afterwards while they drank tea out of tins which had once contained toffee. (Bringing cups or any kind of crockeryware into the Eagle's Eyrie was too precarious a business.) He saw affinity in her eyes as if they were mirrors, but her childishness, which attracted him, scared him, too.

She begged stories of him when his own came to an end, and he found himself repeating the plots of books he had read. They were all adventure stories. He felt that he could tell nothing else to this girl who should have been a boy. And she listened with the dim grey-green of the sea reflected in her eyes.

At last, when a pricking conscience insisted on his departure, she was loth to let him go, and spoke with the frankness of one boy to another. He wondered then how he appeared to her—whether she noticed the bluish tinge around his chin which told of a hardy beard kept in close subjection.

"But you'll come again,

Poddles?" she begged.

"If I may," he said, half teasing. "This

is your kingdom now, you know."
"You found it first," she reminded him. "'The old order changeth," he answered, "'yielding place to new." Below his breath he added: "'And God fulfils Himself in many ways."

She showed no recognition of the quotation, and he added: "You haven't read

Tennyson?"

She shook her head.

"Next time I come," he said, "I'll bring

you the 'Idylls of the King.'"
"You'll come to-morrow?" she asked.

He committed himself to a promise and climbed to the cliff-head. Her voice floated up to him in adieu. And so it came to pass that next day the firm of Lennox and Holmby received notice by wire to the effect that it would be without the services of its junior partner for an indefinite period vaguely described as "a further few days."

On his long walk back to the hotel Holmby strove hard to unravel the threads of joy and trouble woven together in his own heart.

"She's eighteen," he thought defiantly, in answer to a still, small, accusing voice. "She can't be a child for ever. We were made for each other, we who shared the same loneliness and thought the same thoughts as children."

He did not doubt that he loved her, deeming love to be a matter of recognition rather than of time and propinquity. It was as if his soul, yearning back towards

his boyhood, had met and mingled with hers.

"But if I make her love me," he thought,

"I snatch her out of her childhood. Would
she thank me for that? Would she see me
as a clumsy ogre trampling illusions under
his club feet? We're on different planes—
somehow. I can't get back to being Tommy

Poddles. And she—grown up—who knows what she would be like?"

He tried to picture her as mistress of a London home, but imagination failed him, and once he pondered on the advisability of returning to Town without seeing her again. But that was shirking the problem rather than solving it, and, moreover, all his inclinations rebelled against the thought. Besides, he had made his mark on her life, and it was now too late. She had known him for years by the relics of his boyhood, romanced to herself about him, and now they had found each other. Her loneliness, he knew, would be worse than loneliness if he never came back.

So he returned to the Eagle's Eyrie on the following afternoon, bringing her the sort of books that a boy likes to read, and while he was with her he tried to be a boy and treat her like a boy. And every afternoon of the week following found him there. Their comradeship was such that he vaguely wondered how he should ever begin to make

love to her.

But when their friendship was a week old, he whom the Arabs call Kismet took charge of their affairs. They were sitting out in the sun right on the edge of the parapet, and she asked dreamily if he thought that other boys and girls before them had built a hut in the same place and played lonely games. Some lines of Swinburne came into his head, and he quoted them aloud:

"Once there was laughter of old, there was weeping, Haply, of lovers none ever will know, Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping Years ago."

Her own eyes moistened and she stood up, as if to scan the same line of coast upon which the unremembered dead had looked out. While she stood there, balanced against the wind, the thin carpet of earth at her feet suddenly crumbled. With a little cry on her lips and arms outflung, she hovered, unbalanced, over space.

Holmby sprang for her and caught her, gripping her to him in his long arms. They reeled for a moment on the brink, and in that moment he thought that Destiny had solved the problem, which had been vexing

him, in the simplest way of all.

But he regained his balance and hers, and, still holding her in his arms, he drew her away from the parapet. He was trembling from head to foot, she calm and smiling. He stood for many long moments with her still pressed against him, knit tightly in the arms that had saved her. It seemed suddenly that time had ceased. He looked into her eyes, and Love looked back at him.

"Olive!" he said, and kissed her on the lips.

"One of the stories I used to tell myself," she said an hour later, "was that Tommy Poddles was going to marry me. I'm very silly, but—but I hope he'll like me."

"The question is," he said gravely, "whether you'll like the man that Tommy Poddles has become. You see, dear, he had to grow up, and he isn't really Tommy Poddles any more. He couldn't help it. It had to happen."

She regarded him with sudden intuition. "There's a little verse I'd like to say to

him," she said. "It begins:

Grow old along with me;

The best is yet to be,
The last of life for which the first began . . ."

He stared at her.

"Where on earth did you find that?"
"It was in one of the books you brought
me."

Holmby drew a long breath.
"Well," said he, kissing her, "there's some sense in that!"

THE END OF THE TRAIL

OTTWELL BINNS

ILLUSTRATED BY DUDLEY TENNANT

HE railway to Athabasca Landing was still a dream that wakened laughter in the voyageurs who adventured with the northern freights, when one night there was trouble in Pierre Layonne's saloon on the river front. It began with a game of cards, in which Antoine, the riverman, sat on the opposite side of the table to Bill English, whose name might have been that or anything else, so far as men knew to the contrary—and most men suspected it was something else. English was a tall man, with clear-cut features, hooked nose, and eyes that were hooded like a hawk's, and which were, perhaps, the most significant thing about the man, indicative of the predatory instincts that governed his life. Antoine had sat down at the table with six months' pay in his pocket, and had scarce the price of a stick of tobacco left, when suddenly he rose to his feet and, pointing at his opponent, cried out sharply: "M'sieu, you hav' cheat! I saw-

What he saw was never told, for on the accusation the tall Englishman ripped out an oath, rose swiftly to his feet, and in the same second his fist shot out. collapsed like a doll that has had the sawdust shaken out of it, and as he measured his length on the floor and lay still, a man shouted something in the patois of French Canada. Four or five voyageurs, tanned by the harsh suns and hard weather to the colour of seasoned mahogany, started to run towards English, who, with a swift glance, calculated that the rivermen would reach the door first, and decided that it would be as well to stand his ground.

His hand slid quickly behind him, and a second later reappeared with an automatic pistol in its grip. It was not thrust forward -it was held quite carelessly-but there was that in English's eyes which brought the men who were moving toward him to a sudden halt. One of them slipped an oath—" Sacre!"

" Nom de Dieu!" cried another.

They stood bunched together, and English watched them for a moment, flashed a glance at the prone Antoine, then began to back towards the door. No one moved, and he reached the exit unmolested. Still keeping the pistol to the front, he groped for the latch, found it, and then, with a sudden sneering laugh that sounded all through the silent room, he disappeared.

Not till then did anyone move. Three of Antoine's compatriots hurried to him, and one lifted up his head, whilst two others moved towards the door and, after a reasonable time, opened it and looked out into the darkness. It was snowing, snowing hard, and after a glance and a shaking of heads, they closed the door again and, returning, watched their friends' efforts to restore the fallen Antoine.

Someone had procured brandy, and one of the royageurs poured a few drops into Antoine's sagging mouth and waited with confidence. Nothing happened, and the brandy began to dribble out again. Pierre Lavonne's face came a sudden look of anxiety.

"Eet was a great blow," he said to one of the few Britishers in the room. "Maybe Antoine ees killed."

"Oh, rot!" said the Britisher. " He's just knocked out. In five minutes he'll be up and raging for English's blood."

But five minutes passed without any sign of the stricken voyageur's recovery, and Pierre Layonne whispered something to one of his customers, who, unnoticed, left the He returned a few minutes later, accompanied by a tall man, before whom the group around the unconscious Antoine gave way. He flashed one glance at the man on the floor, and there came a look on his face that told Pierre the worst. He knelt down, examined Antoine carefully, and then he stood up.

"Est-il mort?" asked Pierre quickly.
"Yes," answered the police doctor, for

such he was. "How did it happen?"

"Dere was a quarrel over zee cartes, vous comprenez? Antoine he say dat zee oder man he cheat, an' zee oder man he stand up an' he strike Antoine thus!" He illustrated dramatically as he spoke, and continued: "Antoine he fall like a tree, an' he hav' not moved since. Zee oder man—"

"Who was he?" asked the doctor

sharply.

"Beel English!"

"English ?" The doctor was plainly perturbed.

"Oui! Oui!"

"Where is he now?"

"We not know. Jacques an' Henri an' dese oders, when he knock poor Antoine dead, start to take heem; but dey do not go vaire far, for dat Engleesh he whip out a gun, an' as eet ees plain dat he will use it, Henri an' Jacques an' zee oders stand where dey was; an' Beel Englesh he go out of zee door backwards, with zee gun still in zee hand of heem."

The doctor nodded. "Do you suppose that he knew that he had killed Antoine?"

"I not know. He look at heem once-

so—den he not look any more."

Again the doctor nodded thoughtfully, then he gave instructions. "You'd better get Antoine to his cabin, but send someone ahead to break the news to his wife first. It's a case for the police, of course, and I'll carry the news to the Post. They'll arrest English and try him, and probably send him to the penitentiary for manslaughter. Where does he hang out when he's at the Landing, Pierre?"

"He bunks at Red Margot's."

"H'm! An unsavoury place for the scion of a—" The doctor checked himself sharply. "Well, we can none of us help poor Antoine, and I must get back to the Post. It's a beast of a night."

With a curt nod he turned and left the saloon; and scarcely had he gone, when a young half-breed, who had taken no part in the proceedings hitherto, rose from his stool, moved silently across the room, and slipped out of the door. It was, as Dr. Cammick had said, a beast of a night. In the soft snow, running was an

impossibility, but the half-breed made what haste he could, and presently came to the house of Red Margot. Unceremoniously he opened the door and, bursting into a living-room where the red-haired proprietress was busy frying moose-steak and bacon, he asked a question—

"M'sieu English he ees in the house?"
In his room at the back. Just come in.

You know the way, Chictou."

The half-breed did not waste time in replying. He turned swiftly and, hurrying up the boarded passage, knocked at a door behind which were sounds of hasty movements. As he knocked, the sounds ceased, then a hoarse voice said: "Come in!"

Chictou opened the door carefully, and did not plunge into the room as he had plunged up the passage, but gave the occupant of the room ample time to take stock of him. It was, perhaps, as well that he did; for the open door gave him a view of English standing by a pack fastened with thongs, with the pistol in his hand ready for action, plainly a desperate man. He laughed as he recognised the half-breed.

"You, Chictou?"

"Oui, m'sieu. There ees mooch need for haste. Zee poleece dey come to fetch you, for dat fool Antoine—he is keeled."

"I guessed as much. He looked it, and

 ${f I}$ am preparing to run."

"You must go at once, m'sieu. Zee poleece dey will not delay. Go! Go! In an hour I veel bring zee dogs to the Leetle Bluff, an' we go North queeck; an' zee poleece dey veel not take you, for dey veel waste zee taime lookin' for you at zee Landing. Dey are great fools, an' dey veel say, 'Beel English he haf not zee dogs, he cannot run to the North,' an' so we mak' zee getaway."

"Chictou, you're a good sort," cried

English, with some feeling.

"Non, m'sieu," replied Chictou modestly.

"But you save my life in zee rapids, an'
I not forget, nevaire. But go, queeck! I

take zee pack."

"And I'll take the rifle, Chictou," said the other, with a desperate laugh. "I may need it before you come to the Little Bluff with the dogs. One may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, and I don't mean to hang at all, if I can help it."

"Den go, m'sieu, queeck!"

As he spoke, the half-breed took a step forward and, stooping, swung the pack on his shoulders. English gave a swift look round the disordered room, then extinguished the kerosene lamp, and together they passed from Red Margot's into the

snowy street.

Twenty minutes later two men of the Royal North-West Mounted Police knocked on Margot's door, and then, groping for the latch-string, swung the door open just as the proprietress emerged from her room. She looked at them sourly, as one who knew they were no friends of hers, and a question rose to her lips. But before she could ask it, one of the policemen broke in jocularly—

"It's all right, Margot; we haven't come for you—this time. We want Bill English.

Where shall we find him?"

The woman pointed. "In the room at the end of the passage. Chictou is there."

"All right," said the policeman. "Better get under cover. There may be trouble."

Red Margot nodded her comprehension. She had seen trouble of the sort the trooper had hinted at, and had no desire to double the experience. She moved quickly to her own room, but thoughtfully left the door open, and so heard the policeman rap twice on the door of the room she had indicated. A moment later the door was thrown open, then someone struck a match, and a moment later she heard a chagrined voice cry out—

" Scooted, by Jove!"

"Looks like it," responded the second

Red Margot moved into the passage again, and, as she did so, one of the policemen came out of English's room.

"Now, Margot, the truth! When did

English go?"

"I did not know he was gone," answered

the woman with obvious sincerity.

The policeman believed her. "Well, he has. And now it is a case of a stern chase, with the devil's own weather to start in. Better go back to the Post and report, Calstock. There's nothing doing here."

"Seems the obvious thing to do," agreed

the other trooper.

They plunged out of the house into the snowy night, and half an hour later, having made the report, Trooper Myles

Calstock received instructions.

"The case is in your hands, Calstock. A killing is a serious thing, and we've got to get English even if we comb the territories through with a dust comb. Better have a good look round the Landing first. Find Chictou, if you can. I guess he went to warn English, and when you tumble on

the trail, follow it to the end, if it takes you a year. You understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you'd better get going. But be careful. English is no chicken, and he may be desperate. Little is known of him here, but what little there is is not to his credit. He appears to be a broken-down swell turned gambler, and, I suspect, a general ne'er-do-well—one of the sort that the Old Country dumps into the Colonies and thanks Heaven that it is well rid of them. Anyway, you've got to bring him in. That's all."

Trooper Myles Calstock, understanding that he was dismissed, saluted and went out to begin forthwith his difficult task.

II.

Four months later Myles Calstock, still following the trail of Bill English, was racing spring down the frozen bosom of the Yukon. Having encountered a half-breed who had seen Chictou and a white man running to Alaskan territory not half a day ahead of him, he travelled fast and took risks, being in a hurry to overtake his quarry before he could cross the border. That the risks were real risks he knew. There were cracks in the ice. Here and there a chunk swung loose, and down the trail a little stream of water ran. It had not been much at the beginning of the day, but now at broad noon it was rapidly becoming worse. He could feel the water rumbling under the ice, and occasionally there came a miniature explosion, and far out across the wide river, ice, ejected from its place by some unseen hand, flashed in the sunlight and fell back with a crash. Fissures grew frequent, yet still he clung to the trail, feeling certain that, if he could but last out the day, he would overtake Bill English, who could not know how close on his heels he was.

But an hour after noon he was driven towards the bank. There was a rumble and a groaning in the air that left him in no doubt as to what was occurring. The frozen surface of the river was breaking up. Another hour it would be in motion, and to be caught on its heaving bosom was to be snapped in icy jaws of death. As he turned the dogs shorewards, there was a look of chagrin on his face, for to leave the river meant that the man whom he was pursuing had fresh grace, and might escape altogether. Then suddenly his face lightened, for from the bank a mile down river he saw rising a tall plume of smoke.

"A camp," he muttered. "Bill English and Chictou, for a thousand pound." He looked at the trail, awash with water, marked the impassable nature of the wooded shore, and then nodded. "I'll hang on to the end." He turned his dogs again. They were reluctant to face the watery trail, but he forced them with the whip. As he did so, there was a sound like thunder in the air, and the ice under his feet seemed to shudder and heave, as the mighty river strove to throw off the icy fetters of winter.

The sound and the sense of movement grew continuous. Now and again there was a crackle like scattered rifle-fire, sometimes a crash as, by the pressure of water, a floe was cast out to fall in splinters. The water grew deeper, the peril every moment more imminent, but he clenched his teeth and drove on. He had now no choice, for the river bank had become a bastion of smooth rock that it would be impossible to scale, and as he fled onward he could hear the

grinding of the ice against the rock. He knew that he had been foolhardy, that he had taken a risk that was likely to be his utter undoing. Fissures multiplied. The reverberation in the air was continuous, rolling, as he knew, down the thousand miles of country through which the river flowed. A swirl of water met him, sweeping the dogs off their feet, so that for a moment they were swimming; but he held them to it, since no other course was possible, lashing them forward, steering them round fissures, splashing through water that now ran like a stream on the surface of the crumbling ice. It was a race with death, and he knew it. Any moment the trail might give way under his feet and throw him into the water, now surging towards its far bourne in the Behring Sea, or any moment a huge piece of ice might rise in front of him like a prancing horse and, falling on him, smash him to nothingness. Death beset him behind and before, on his right hand and on his left hand; but he kept his eye on that plume of smoke, for there, as he was now able to see, the bastion ended, and to make the shore was possible. Soon he was able to make out an encampment, and a little later three figures that seemed to be standing to watch his perilous career.
"Three!" he murmured. "It can't be

English and Chic——"

A huge piece of ice lifted itself on end not half a score of yards away, and as it crashed, sending splinters that hit him with the force of stones cast from a sling, the

dogs swerved and bolted for the shore. It did not matter now. A hundred and fifty yards ahead the bastion ran down into a soft bank that it would be possible to climb, and he caught the gleam of the fire at the encampment. The three people on shore were waving their arms to him, shouting, he had no doubt, but in the thunder of the breaking ice their cries were lost as completely as if they had been the thin hum of so many gnats.

He raced on. Ice upended itself here, there, everywhere. A cake on the edge of which he set his feet dipped and the water swirled to his waist. He leaped and landed on a fresh floe, his dogs tearing ahead, yards in front of him. Twenty yards more—fifteen—— A floe just ahead of him was jerked clean into the air. He tried to turn aside, to run as it came hurtling towards him. He fell sprawling, saw in a flash one of the figures on shore running down the bank, caught the crash of the floe as it fell; then a lump of ice, broken off by the fall, whizzed forward and caught him on the head, knocking all the consciousness out of him.

When he came to himself, there was the pungent sting of brandy in his throat, and a man-no, a woman's face was bending over him. A mist came before his eyes, his head swam; then the mist cleared, his head grew steady, and as he looked into that smiling face, his own was suddenly filled with wonder.

"Eunice!" he muttered. "No, I am dreaming!"

The woman gave a sobbing laugh. "It's a miracle you are not dreaming in Elysian fields, considering the chances you take, Myles Calstock. But for the strength of my right arm, at which you used to mock-

She broke off and glanced significantly towards the heaving river-ice, and Calstock twisted his neck to look. Pandemonium seemed to reign on the Yukon River. The ice was everywhere in motion, and the river seemed to have risen many feet since he had gone down in unconsciousness. He guessed that somewhere the ice had jammed and was checking the free movement of the river, damming its surge to the sea with its billion tons of ice. He gave a little shudder, and sat up, holding his head, which he thus discovered was bandaged.

"I remember," he said reflectively. "A piece of ice hit me." Then he broke off, and an incredulous light shot in his eyes. "You -you hauled me out of that, Eunice?"



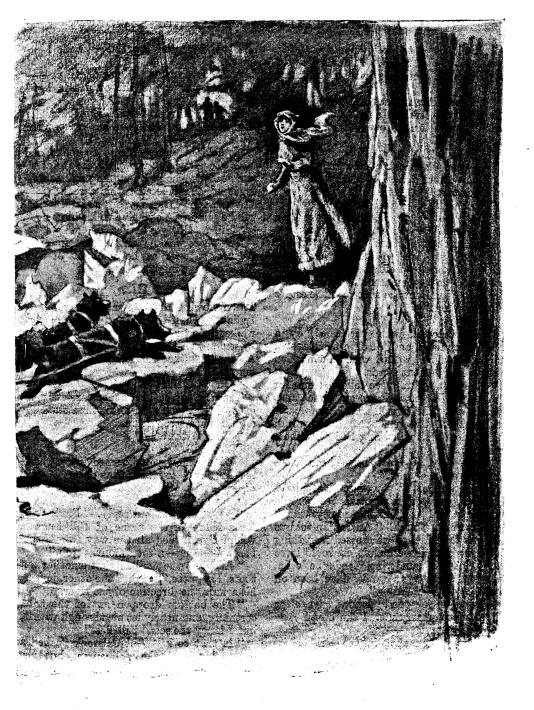
"A floe just ahead of him was jerked clean into the air. He tried to turn aside, to run as it came hurtling

"I did—alone, with the strength of my own right arm," laughed the girl.
"You risked your life—for me."
"Oh," cried the girl lightly, "there wasn't much risk. It was like hopping on moving stepping-stones."

"I know better, Eunice. You took a tremendous chance."

"Well, I wasn't going to see a man drown or be ground to mincemeat in that ice,

"You didn't know it was I?"



towards him. He fell sprawling, saw in a flash one of the figures on shore running down the bank."

Hadn't the ghost of a suspicion, though I'm glad it was you. But you really ought to have more sense than to keep the trail on a river that's breaking up. Even a chechaquao like me knows that. I could shake you, Myles Calstock, for being such a fool."

Calstock looked round. Two Indians were standing watching the river, too interested to note what was happening elsewhere. "Better kiss me instead, Eunice."

"Myles Calstock, if you weren't my cousin-

"You'll have to do it sooner or later, you know," he urged. "Having saved my life, there's nothing left but to marry me."

"Do you still want me to, Myles?" asked the girl, with sudden shyness. "You've heard that I threw over Martington, I suppose?"

"Yes to both questions."

"I found that I didn't care for him, and when my father died, I told him the truth and then came out here to find Bill.

"To find Bill! Isn't he home?"

"No. He has not been in England for three years. After that unfortunate business at Newmarket, father and he had a row, and Bill left home, and we didn't know where he was till someone said they had seen him out here; so last summer I came to look for him. You know he succeeds, the estate being entailed."

"Yes, yes."

Myles Calstock was perturbed by a sudden suspicion, and, deaf to the clamour out on the river, waited with ill-concealed

anxiety for the next words.

"I've found him. I've followed him for a month. Yesterday I was only one camp behind him. The river'll hold him up, as it held me, and I've sent an Indian forward with a note that will bring Bill along here to-morrow."

"But-why, I must have been close

behind you for a week."

"Possibly, but if you were this side of the river, you wouldn't know. We were on the other, and the Yukon's pretty wide." She gave a gay laugh. "An Indian told us Bill was this side, so we crossed first thing this morning. If we hadn't, it would have been a case of sundering floods between, and you, Myles, you would have been on your way to the Behring."

"Yes, but for you! Eunice, girl, after all, you must marry me. I can buy myself

out of the Service-"

A tender look shot in the girl's eyes.

"I-I might!"

"You must," he urged, "whatever happens."

But what's going to happen?" asked

the girl, struck by his earnestness.

"Oh, I don't know! But promise, Eunice,

promise!"
"Well," she said, with a little smile, "since you're so urgent, and since your love for me is so great, and since when I. was to marry Martington I suddenly discovered that I loved you just a little "-

she broke off and laughed—"well, I pro-

"Whatever comes, life or death or-" "Whatever comes, life or death, battle

Calstock staggered suddenly to his feet as she spoke, and broke on her uncompleted sentence. "Kiss me, Eunice!"

He held his arms wide as he spoke, and, with one glance at the stolid backs of the two Indians, the girl, laughing and sobbing together, surrendered to his caress.

A moment later she broke free. will be just in time to give us his blessing.

"Bill? Oh, yes! Yes, of course!" But there was no enthusiasm in Myles Calstock's tones as he thought of what Bill's coming might mean.

III..

THE following day, towards evening, an Indian, a half-breed, and a white man walked into the camp, weary and overborne by the march through the primeval woods. As she saw the white man, Eunice flung herself towards him.

"Oh, Bill, Bill!"

The man kissed her rather carelessly, his eyes on Calstock's uniform, then suddenly he made the recognition.

"You, Myles?",

"Yes, Bill."

"Didn't know you'd turned into a Chaseme-Charley," laughed the other a trifle discordantly. "I suppose you're up here in the way of duty?"

"Yes," was the curt reply. "I'm looking for a fellow of the name of Bill English, whom I've trailed all the way from Athabasca Landing—a four months' job."

"And lost the trail in that smother out there, I suppose," laughed the other, jerking his arm in the direction of the river.

"The bottom dropped out of the trail, certainly, and nearly let me through with it,

but I fancy the scent still lies."

"Is that so?" Bill Calstock flashed a swift glance at the policeman, but the latter's face was expressionless; and, after a few commonplaces, the new-comer turned to his sister and fell into earnest conversation with her, the pair walking along the edge of the wood whilst they talked.

Trooper Calstock watched them, sparing a glance occasionally for the half-breed, who had come into camp and who was helping Eunice's Indians to prepare supper. sently Bill English approached him.

"So it seems I've to give and receive

congratulations, Myles. Eunice has told me, first, that she has promised to marry you, and, secondly, that I've succeeded and am now Sir William Calstock."

"Congratulations, of course, Sir William."

"Bill to you," laughed the baronet. Then he asked a question: "I suppose you'll chuck this thief-taking job, now that you're to marry Eunice?"

"When I've finished the present trailyes," answered the trooper carelessly.

"Can't think why you continued it even

so long," answered the baronet.

"Point of honour to finish the job, of course," said the other, with a faint smile.

"Queer, the way that sort of thing clings to one," said Sir William musingly. "Now, you wouldn't think that Chictou there-

"Chic-who?"

"Chictou, my half-breed, and one of the best!"

Myles Calstock looked at the other steadily, and the hooded eyes met his without flinching-there was even a smile on the baronet's face, as if he found the situation amusing. To the trooper it was anything but that; but beyond that steady look he gave no sign until after supper, when, the girl having retired, he rose suddenly from his seat by the fire and crossed to where her brother sat smoking. There was a look of purpose in his bearing which the other easily interpreted, and with a little laugh of malice he asked:

So you're going to do it, Myles?"

"I must. It's in the way of duty." "You're a pretty fool! What do you think Eunice will have to say, if you do?"

"I don't know, but-well, Bill English,

I arrest you for——"

"Look across the fire, man," interrupted

the other sharply.

Myles Calstock looked quickly round. Chictou was kneeling on one knee, rifle at

shoulder, drawing a bead on him.

"I see," said the trooper, "but it makes no difference. I've to get you for the murder of Antoine Ladronne at the Landing on November seventh last, and I warn you that anything you say-"

"Ah, you mean to see it through?"

"I must whilst I'm in the Service." "And you won't be warned?"
No!"

"Then be hanged to you!"

As he spoke, Sir William Calstock, alias Bill English, flung up a hand, and suddenly

the breed, taking deliberate aim, fired. The trooper, shot through the shoulder, spun half-way round and collapsed. He groped for his pistol, found it, and was in the act of drawing it when he fainted clean away.

When he revived, Eunice was bending over him tenderly. There were tears in her eyes-tears which brimmed over and splashed on his face whilst she attended to him. Presently she looked round.

"Bill?" he asked. "Where-"

"He is running for the border. He's left you a note. I shall never speak to him again. Here is the note." She produced a couple of leaves torn from a pocket-book and folded in two.

"Read it, my dear."

She opened the note and read aloud: "My dear brother-in-law to be, I knew you'd try it on—you are that kind of idiot but as I don't want to go to Stony Mountain Penitentiary nor alternatively to be hung, I let Chictou have his way. I'm running for Alaska, and shall reach it in four days, travelling quietly, as you are out of action. But I give you my word of honour that Bill English was not cheating when that fool Antoine accused him, that when he struck him he never meant to kill him, and that here Bill's trail ends for ever. Eunice is in a frightful rage with me, and I can't make her see that, for both of us, to put you out of action was the best-indeed, the onlyway. Do your best to make her see it, and to consider my extreme action in a more tolerant light. Given such a piquant situation as we were in, no other solution was possible, as I hope you'll allow. See you again-some day-Bill."

"Oh, I'll never speak to him!" sobbed

Eunice.

"But he's right, of course," interrupted the trooper. "I was bound to try for him, and if I'd got him and taken him down to the Landing, there's no saying what might have happened, and always he'd have stood between you and me. Now he's out of the way, and I've not got to send him to Stony Mountain. And you and I are together, Eunice, at the end of an old trail and at the beginning of another. When I am well——''

'That Chictou might have killed you!"

cried the girl fiercely.

"But he hasn't; and though I haven't got Bill, I have you."

"Yes," cried the girl, "yes!"-and, stooping, kissed him in complete surrender.

THE IMMORTAL GUINEA-PIG

By RONALD MACDONALD

IOHN CAMPBELL ILLUSTRATED BY

ECKINGTON VILLAGE suspected Madely Towers, and vaguely feared the fine house with the splendid gardens and the grim wall enclosing them. 'The Red Lion" faces the graceful stone bridge which crosses the Ifflet, and from Madely Towers into Beckington there is no way but the bridge, unless you walk two

So the landlord of "The Red Lion" saw almost everyone who came from or went to the old country house—turned ten years ago into a sanatorium—for the railway-station was on the same side of the Ifflet as the inn.

There was scarce an inmate of the Towers but would, in the course of a week, come walking over the bridge which crossed the deep-rushing little river. Now and again one would stop, order something, and drink it under the inquisition of five or six pairs of eyes. But in none of Dr. Anson's patients could "The Red Lion" find a hole to pick. The men drank little and talked pleasantly; and the younger of them, though they seldom stayed long at the Towers, always left it looking stronger and happier.

Of the women, except that they did not drink at "The Red Lion," the same things might be said; they left Dr. Anson's a little fatter, a little browner, and a great deal happier, if looks were to be trusted, than

when they came.

The older patients, however, stayed longer; some three or four, Odgers, the landlord, was ready to swear, had been there since Anson took the house. And it was the elder men and women who gave the inn and the village that sense of the unknown and the unaccountable which had ripened into suspicion.

That the young and jaded should in this mild yet stimulating air become younger, happier, and keener was all in the course of Nature; but that the decrepit, the fat, and

the senile should, in the course whether of a few months or fewer years, grow erect, lose grossness, and come alive again to the world around them, was-well, it savoured of witchcraft, the black art of which the tradition yet lingers in some parts of that county.

Many in Beckington thought, and all Beckington had some perception of the notion as Beckington's united opinion, that Dr. Anson was up to no good, and was playing a queer game-working a spell or deviltry of some kind on the people who would have seemed, to you or me, to have got nothing but healing from him.

Yet almost every man in Beckington who did not himself owe something to the wisdom and kindness of Dr. Anson, knew two or three others who did. But that lean figure, that brown face, those thin lips, the alert gait and the ready ear seemed, to the rustic mind, to consort ill with the "in-turned" expression of the eyes.

"However kind and clever he be," Sam Odgers would say, "it always seems like as if it was some other chap, not you, as he's

doing it for."

After heavy rain in the first week of August had come splendid summer weather. Odgers himself had brought out the ale which Tompkins, from Boulger's Farm, was drinking.

Tompkins, lowering the pewter from his face, saw right in front of him, coming down the hill on the other side of the river, a little old lady. He pointed across the bridge

with the tankard.

"Who's she?" he asked.

" Looks like Mrs. Anson—doctor's mother, up to Madely," said Odgers. "She's too old to be running, let alone the heat."

" And never hat nor bonnet on her head!"

exclaimed Tompkins.

The figure drew nearer, running with the pitiable, flat-footed trot of an old woman.

Tompkins dropped the pewter mug into the road, gathered the reins in a short grip, and snatched his whip from the socket on

the splashboard.

"She'll do herself a hurt," he said, and struck his horse, for the first time almost in his life galloping a dog-cart downhill. Something told him not to let the woman reach the bridge, and his very zeal undid him. The trotting figure and the galloping horse met near the far end of the bridge. He could see the face now—desperate, if not mad. To avoid crushing her against the wall with his near wheel, Tompkins drew out a little. The woman trotted by him, helping her pace with hands that scrambled like rats along the breast-high parapet.

He divined that she did not mean to cross the bridge, and it seemed to him an age before he succeeded in stopping and turning the cart, heading the horse back towards the inn. In reality, he had done it all in the shortest possible time, but, as he came abreast of her, the little old woman had her second knee on the parapet, and was struggling to her feet for the leap into the

water.

Tompkins jumped from his seat in time only to grasp a handful of her skirt as she went over. A jagged piece of black stuff in his hand was all he gained by it. A downward glance showed him some clothes and a grey head bobbing and twisting down

the quick water.

He ran back to the end of the bridge she had come from, vaulted the fence where it met the parapet, and ran along the grass bank till he had distanced the grey head, now almost submerged. He judged his time, flopped in, and swam. In spite of the stream he was strong enough to reach its middle as she came down to him, now under water. Somehow he got the poor, draggled head over his shoulder, and then, with only one arm at work, had all he could do to keep the two mouths free. Feebly but doggedly he was swimming for the Beckington bank, and wondering how long he would hold out if he could not break through the mid strength of the current, when he heard a shout, and next moment felt the slap of a line falling across his shoulders. He caught the rope with his free hand—Odgers was at its other end-and in a minute and a half Tompkins and his burden were ashore.

They carried the little woman up through

"The Red Lion" paddock to the inn, not knowing whether she were dead or alive.

Mrs. Odgers met them at the back door, screaming: she had seen death approaching, she thought, through the apple trees.

But "Shut thy mouth!" said Odgers; and when she saw the grey, draggled head between his arms, she was not only silent, but became again the efficient woman her husband knew.

They carried the helpless body to the landlady's room. Mrs. Odgers, knowing nothing of artificial respiration, began at once to strip the wizened little form, sending the men from the room as if modesty were more than life.

Odgers ran to the kitchen to fill bottles with hot water.

Tompkins helped himself to spirits in the deserted bar, and remembered his horse and trap. As he went out into the road, he saw that a small crowd had already gathered, in the midst of which was Dr. Anson's motor-car, and the Doctor, asking what had happened.

He left the car, meeting Tompkins on the

steps.

"Upstairs," said Tompkins, pointing the way. And then, after a moment's hesitation, "They do say it's Mrs. Anson, sir," he added.

"Fetch the lady from my car," said

Anson, and leapt up the stairs.

A woman in a silk dust-coat was already getting out. She was of graceful figure, pale of face, with large brown eyes. The crowd watched her speak with Tompkins and then enter the house.

"Doctor herself," he heard one man say to another. "My sister's courtin' with the second gardener at the Towers. She've got letters after her name—same's a man. She's his assistant—not so much with the patients, gardener says, as in the other games."

"Games what games?" asked Tomp-

zina

"How sh'd I know? There's the rabbits in their hutches, and rats and guinea-pigs. Stinkin' vermin, all of 'em—but I pities 'em."

An hour later, when they brought old Mrs. Anson, wrapped in blankets, and with the draggled hair decently hidden, down to the car, Tompkins was again there. Having risked something in getting her out of the water, he had a modest curiosity to see that she lived. He was pleased by the tenderness of her son, and of the lady who was also a doctor, in securing her comfort. A little

flutter inside him rather hoped that somebody would say "Thank you." Yet he kept himself and his glass religiously aloof. became awkwardness when Tompkins felt, in moving, the coat and trousers which neither belonged to nor fitted him.

Dr. Anson gave him his hand. "My debt is too great for words, Mr. Tompkins," he said. "May I come and see you at Boulger's End?" Then he turned to the white face framed in blanket and silk handkerchief. "Mother," he said, "this is Mr. Tompkins. He saved your life at the risk of his own." The eyes in the pale face had been half closed. Now they came wide open and met those of the blushing Tompkins.

"'I came to tell you how I felt-felt your delicacy, and how I think you have just that sympathetic spirit of a sportsman which my husband loved finding in a man."

Anson, on the point of starting, leaned over and seemed to ask a question of Sam Odgers. Answering, Odgers glanced at Tompkins and beckoned him. Modesty

In a voice very low, but so exquisitely clear that the words were heard by at least half a dozen of the villagers as well as by Sam Odgers and his wife, Mrs. Anson spoke.

"I shall never forgive him," she said. And the delicate old face twitched as the

eves closed.

No comment was possible. Anson started his car, nodding, with a deprecating smile, at Tompkins. The lady who was, they said, also a doctor, looked back also to nod and smile, and Tompkins thought the smile made her beautiful.

Beckington discovered as many explanations as it invented versions of the Tompkins, who was not Beckington proper, said nothing. Of true Beckington men, Odgers said the least. But his office did once or twice force him to give an opinion; it seemed like as if the poor lady had been tired of being alive, and that was a thing as could happen easy enough, without no witchcraft nor foul play in it. Seemed a pity like, he said softly onceto the Reverend Mr. Merridew—that he and Tompkins had been looking over river when she came ambling down to the bridge. And Mr. Merridew, though nodding sympathetically, said something formal of bearing the burdens laid upon us. To which Sam Odgers replied that there might be burdens, so to speak, outside of the bargain. What bargain, Merridew did not ask. But Odgers continued, as if explanation were incumbent, whether asked or not:

"I've always looked at the whole thing, you see, sir, as a bargain 'tween me and summat that I-well, that I just has to guess at. And part of that bargain-way I look at it, you see, Mr. Merridew—part of

that bargain is——

Odgers was shy. So was Merridew, but

he managed to nod encouragement.

"The days of our years are three-score years and ten-it says that somewheres, you know, Mr. Merridew," Odgers explained. "And summat more—saying, like, if you do happen to get the long pull, you'll mebbe find it a drop over what you needed."

"Well?" asked Merridew guardedly, but quickly suspicious of what the man meant

to convey.

Odgers looked him straight in the eyes for the first time that day. "Ever kept

guinea-pigs, parson?" he asked.

"When I was a little boy, but not for long. The little beasts were always dying. I had six once, and a thunderstorm killed three."

"Oldest I ever knew," said Odgers, with a certain grim significance, "was six years. I'm not saying you mightn't get one to live seven—p'r'aps even eight—but they've got a guinea-pig up to Madely Towers what'll be nineteen years come Christmas."

Mr. Merridew went home feeling rather sick. And Odgers, knowing his man, never asked him not to repeat what he had said.

Dr. Anson came, as he had promised, to see Tompkins. Though both were simpleminded men, and though each had the best manners of his class, there was constraint on both sides, to which Tompkins, at the end of the interview, gave partial expression

Modestly, even diffidently, Anson had taken from the car a beautifully-made, old-fashioned hunting-crop, asking the farmer to keep it in memory of his gratitude.

Tompkins demurring inarticulately— "It was my father's," said Anson. "He was a great man after the hounds. He and my mother-well, such devotion as theirs seems to me a very rare thing, Mr. Tompkins. He has been dead ten years. you to take it as from him.

Poor Tompkins had a feeling "above himself." He turned flaming red in the face, and his hands were behind his back.

"Can't be done, Dr. Anson," he said. Then, seeing the pain and astonishment on the other man's face, he took the desperate venture of comforting him with the truth: "I'm thinking, if things were that way with him, your father, sir, would like enough have as little thanks for what I did as your mother had."

Anson was a gentleman, and accepted the honesty of the explanation, doing his best to hide the pain it gave him. He laid the whip on the seat of the car, assured the unhappy Tompkins of at least a son's gratitude, shook hands with him warmly, and drove away.

Three days later the car came again, but this time it brought Mrs. Anson herself.

Tompkins was there when she came, and her face wore an expression of contrition so gentle and appealing that he helped her out very tenderly.

He led her into his stiff and stuffy parlour

and put her into its best chair.

"You're a kind man, as well as a very brave one, Mr. Tompkins," she said. want you to forgive me-my ingratitude."

"If what I did seemed an injury, ma'am, rather than a good turn-" he began.

But she interrupted him.

"It was a good turn," she said. "Suicide is wicked. I've always been taught so, and believed it, so I seem to have no excuse."

"They do say 'tis the Lord knows the excuses." murmured Tompkins,

embarrassed.

"I hope so," she answered simply. "My son told me, Mr. Tompkins, why you refused to accept from him a thing which he and I prize very much. The whip belonged to one of the most famous crosscountry riders in the shires—Major James Anson, my husband."

Tompkins made the mouth of a man about to whistle in astonishment, but checked himself at the cost of a small hiss.

"'Tis a fine whip, and a fine man they say he was, ma'am. Did you do me the honour to come here to-day to make me take it?"

"No, I came to tell you how I felt-felt your delicacy, and how I think you have iust that sympathetic spirit of a sportsman which my husband loved finding in a man."

Tompkins was struck to the heart with

pleasure, but did not speak.

"And also," she went on, in her clear, thin voice, with such beauty of pronunciation as Tompkins had not heard since the old Taverner family, driven out by the Death Duties, had parted with Madely Towers—" and also, Mr. Tompkins, I came because I wanted to tell you how it all happened."

D'you think, ma'am, as that's wise? It's mostly best to let them things lie. can see you're a good, kind lady, and I can believe in a heavy trouble without even trying to guess what it might be. It hasn't hurt me, ma'am, what you said, 'cept that I've been wishing whiles that I'd not interfered. But——"

"But there's no time to ask questions, is there, when a crazy old woman is trying to take headers off a bridge? You'll have to listen to me, please So fill your pipe, Mr. Tompkins, and sit down—there."

She pointed to a chair facing hers, and Tompkins obeyed, even to taking his pipe out of his pocket. But after her first words

he forgot to fill it.

"My son, Dr. Philip Anson, earned high distinction at Cambridge," she said, "and afterwards in the hospital and the examinations in London. But his love for his father made him content with a country practice in our part of Leicestershire, so that they might see each other almost every day. But after my husband's death Philip chose this place, Madely Towers, as best suited for carrying out what he called his life's work. What that was I did not understand

at the time, and I was surprised when I found that this new place, so far from our old house, was just only a kind of sanatorium. I could not bring myself to leave the place where his father and I had been so happy together. For the first two or three years of my widowhood I was fairly content. Philip came often to see me, and, as my health seemed rapidly declining, I believed I should soon join his father. My friends used sometimes to speak of me as a saint, alluding to the resignation with which I endured my ailments. I used to laugh secretly over that, because every twinge of sciatica, every cold in the head, every attack of influenza, was counted as a step towards towards my husband, Mr. Tompkins. Only I wanted to see my son married first."

She paused a moment, as if asking whether

he understood.

Tompkins nodded gravely.

"Two years ago I nearly died of pneumonia. Philip came to me, nursed me, and brought me here. He told me he believed he could make me quite strong again, and I submitted to his treatment and to staying on here the more willingly that I didn't believe all the doctors in the world could keep me from dying very soon, and also because there was a lady in his house working with him, whom I liked very much,

and whom I hoped he would marry.

"Well, I saw a good many patients come and go, and I wasn't surprised when they got well in such clever hands. But some of the old ones stayed on and on, and seemed to grow, not only stronger, but younger. One day I questioned Miss Sylvia Clive-Dr. Clive, they call her—and she told me that there wasn't a man in the world who'd been so successful in averting and combating the first stages of senile decay as Dr. Anson. She is very sweet and kind, and, somehow, the phrase 'senile decay' didn't frighten me so much as if she'd said he knew how to keep people from growing old. But some little time after that I was talking to one of the patients—a Mr. Blyfield, a gentleman who has been there for six years. He's eighty years old next month.'

"I've seen Mr. Blyfield," said Tompkins, "and talked to him. I'd have given him

a bare sixty."

And he saw a slender shudder run over

the old woman's body.

"That—that," she said very softly, " is the horror of it. An old man that isn't old enough can become as ghastly as a child that won't grow up. Well, I was talking to Mr. Blyfield, when he suddenly laughed in

a very queer way.

"' Ma'am,' he said, 'it's immortality he's Your son's jumped ahead of Metchnikoff as far as Stephenson outpaced Jamie Watt. We keep it quiet here, we old ones, because we want to play the game with Man's a long liver, anyhow, Dr. Anson. and takes a bit of observing. But I was an awful case of senile decay at seventy-four, They had a man and two women to feed, wash, and brush me. A doll, ma'am, I was, with too little sawdust in my calico veins. Look at me now!' he said, and threw out his chest and waggled that dreadful white beard. Mr. Tompkins, so that he gave me an awful fit of shuddering.

"Then the old gentleman—for you must understand, Mr. Tompkins, that he is a gentleman in a sort of way; he is always gentle and considerate to me. I mustn't forget that, because my son and Miss Clive were always so busy in the annex—"

Here honest Tompkins interrupted to ask

what an annex might be.

"They call it the annex—the great wide shed where there are all sorts of rooms where all sorts of queer things are being done all day, and where all the nice young men look always so anxious," explained Mrs. Anson. "Miss Clive and my son were so much in the annex, and amongst the cages where all the strange animals are kept—"

"Animals? What animals?"

"Rats, rabbits, and guinea-pigs," replied the old lady, "one or two horses that don't work, and a few dogs."

Tompkins laughed as if relieved of

anxiety.

"But those are common animals enough,

ma'am," he said.

"They are strange ones—at Madely Towers, in the wire hutches and cages and stalls," persisted Mrs. Anson.

" Why?"

"They don't die, Mr. Tompkins," she replied, and the pretty, gentle old face was full of horror. "This Mr. Blyfield was very kind and attentive, and I liked him till he started this subject. And I couldn't keep him off it, and it frightened me. At first I thought he was crazy, but I found there were one or two others who believed at least that their lives were being indefinitely prolonged. The Doctor didn't like it being talked about, they said, and had never professed more than to have gone further than any other physician in the successful

treatment of old age as a disease. Mr. Blyfield said that was certainly the philosophic way to regard it. There are many diseases, he said, and they all lead to death. Old age is just the commonest of them—that's all.

"I found I had no difficulty in avoiding this kind of talk with the others, but Mr. Blyfield became tiresome. So at last I told him that the subject didn't interest me. He became much excited, and said it ought to interest me very much, because I was one of them—had undergone the same treatment that he and the others had been through. This I denied, but when he described it as far as he had been permitted to understand it, I believed he was right. It made me very unhappy, Mr. Tompkins, to think that I might have to—to go on and on——"

Tompkins, his face full of sympathy,

nodded to show that he understood.

"Of course I didn't believe all that Mr. Blyfield hoped. That would have been too horrible. I asked Miss Clive to explain it all to me, but got so little out of her that at last I went to my son. We had never quarrelled before, Mr. Tompkins, and it was very dreadful."

Then she forgot that Farmer Tompkins was so far from being of her own people that he was not even of her class, and spoke to him as her intimate in a common humanity.

"I don't mean that he quarrelled; it was I that quarrelled with my son, because he had healed me, Mr. Tompkins—healed me so well that he couldn't even tell me when I was likely to die. I walked out of his study, out of the grounds into the road, miserable because I had hurt him, and miserable because Mr. Blyfield's horrid hope had become my worst fear. I went a little mad, I suppose, with the desire of death. I found myself running down the hill to the bridge, hoping to get into the cool water before I fainted.

"Then I saw an enemy in a chariot, galloping down the other hill towards me. I saw you pull your horse to save me from being crushed. I knew you'd come back after me, and I was determined to get over the edge before you could eatch me. I did. And even now I can't think how you managed to get me alive out of that strong

little river.'

Tompkins told her how he and Odgers had accomplished the ungrateful rescue.

"That was very brave and clever of you both," she said. Her mouth smiled seriously

and her eyes shone, Tompkins thought, like

a girl's.

There followed a pause which did not make Tompkins uncomfortable. For this simple old lady had put him at peace with himself as well as with her.

At last she said:

"What am I to do, Mr. Tompkins?"

"Ma'am," he answered, "you've no right to take it into your own hands."

"But I must go away some day to Major

Anson—you do see that, don't you?"

"Seems to you that that was one of the rules of the game, when you began playing, don't it, ma'am?" he asked.

Mrs. Anson nodded her head like a bird

pecking.

"It's quite extraordinary, Mr. Tompkins," she said, "how well you understand."

"May I ask—without offence, ma'am—may I ask your age?"

"I am just seventy," she replied.

"Even cricket, ma'am," said Tompkins diffidently, "has a printed book of the rules. The Bible's been printed a long time. It don't say when you've a right to declare the innings closed—to be sure it don't. But it does say you may expect seventy overs, and that anything beyond that's a bit too much. And the language not being what you might call precise and lawyer-like, it leaves me, anyhow, ma'am, with a notion that, if the match was pulled out by some trick of stopping the sun and no night coming between, I'd say there was a most unsportsmanlike Joshua in league with a bad umpire, and, dash it, I'd draw the stumps!"

Apart from his ambiguous service of pulling her out of the Ifflet, Tompkins and Mrs. Anson had something in common: she had been the wife of a gentleman famous for his lofty interpretation of the rules of the game, and the farmer was captain of the cricket team which practised and sometimes even played a match in one of his own

fields.

"You mean, Mr. Tompkins, that when I find it running into the hundred and fifth year or so, I may say: 'Tisn't fair! Shan't play any more!'"

"That's what I mean, ma'am," said

Tompkins.

" Who's to fix the time?"

"It's between you and the Lord, ma'am,"

said Tompkins.

"What would you do," she asked, almost gaily, "if you caught me jumping into the Ifflet again? I'm afraid it wouldn't be

good for your high reputation just to stand and look on, would it?"

"I think I should do the same as before," he answered. "I couldn't leave my job, you see, ma'am, to another chap. But I don't think I'd need to hold your head quite so high out of the water."

The little old lady laughed aloud and rose

from her chair.

"I'm so glad I came to see you," she said. "I wanted only your forgiveness, and you've given me your sympathy. I feel better for meeting a gentleman who quite understands. Will you please put me in the car?"

When she was seated, Tompkins, tucking the rug round her, saw the riding-crop which had belonged to the late Major Anson lying in the other corner. He picked it up.

"I should like to keep it, ma'am—if I

may?" he said.

"Oh, thank you!" she cried eagerly. "Dr. Anson will be so glad when I tell him." Then, just as the car was moving, she leaned towards him and said softly: "I'm going to be quite reasonable, thanks to you, Mr. Tompkins."

For seven years Anson and Merridew, the

parson, had been friends.

On the Saturday night after Tompkins had accepted the gift of the hunting-crop, Merridew had fallen asleep over the preparation of the next morning's sermon, and was jerked from a charming dream of flyfishing in Heaven by a tapping on the glass of his study window. He opened it and let in Dr. Anson.

After one glance at his visitor's face, instead of asking what he came for, Merridew made much of him, pushing him down into the big chair, finding the box with three remaining cigars in it, and fetching whisky from the dining-room.

"I don't take it," said Anson, looking kindly at the tumbler which Merridew

offered him.

"You doctors," said the host, "think you know everything. If you want to talk to me, my good man, you'll swallow that. If there's a man in the world knows what another man ought to drink, and how much, I do. It's part of my job."

Having cut the last but two of his cigars, he almost put it in his guest's mouth, and

struck a match for him.

"I got those at a City dinner," he said.
"I have known them soften the pangs of confession."

Anson laughed softly.

"You've come to confess, haven't you?" asked Merridew.

"Something like it," admitted Anson,

scent of his boyhood. He swallowed a

mouthful from the tumbler.
"Good whisky," he said. "I came to talk to you, anyhow."



" You've been thinking so much of life that you've forgotten about living."

still smiling. He had lived with patients, women, and subordinate male assistants so long and so exclusively that to hear a man jest of drink and tobacco brought back a "Why me?" asked Merridew.

"Because you're an outsider. I'm disposed to tell you things I can't at present speak of to another man of science, also because I know you have a long head and a sound heart. I don't know whether you taken any interest in bacteriology."

Merridew glanced at his visitor whim-

"I read a little, in a slovenly kind of way," he said-" Metchnikoff, for instance."

"That'll make it easier for me. Even at Cambridge prolongation of life was my hobby. It became my passion in general practice. By the time I was free, and rich enough to make it the work of my life, I was already ahead of Metchnikoff. I've had him to use, but I never published word that could help him. But nine years ago, just after I came here, I seemed at a deadlock. Then suddenly the key was pushed into my hand by what they call chance. The discovery was really a by-product of the bacteriological research which never ceases in my laboratories."

"Was it a serum or an anti-toxin?"

asked Merridew.

"Neither. Just a modification, permanent and reproductive, you understand a modified form of the bacillus coli. It has the extraordinary property, to put the matter in popular language of neutralising, in definite mathematical proportion, the work of the whole group of the bacteria of putrefaction."

"And so, I suppose, if introduced into the human system, of arresting the self-poisoning which Metchnikoff writes of—auto-intoxication, what ?—caused by the absorption into the blood of the products of putrefaction?"

Anson nodded. "That'll do," he said.

"Doesn't he say, too, that the phagocytes are over-stimulated by these same products until they prey upon the specific cells of the tissues?"

"H'm!" grunted Anson. "We'd better leave that. Amounts to a pious opinion."

"But your—your mutated bacillus?" "Oh, I'm not going to tell you his history, nor how I got him." said Anson. "Not even the assistant who first put me on his track knows that I cared for him and used him. I alone—I and Miss Clive alone know the whole story. Nobody else on earth.

She and I have to do the cultivation." "Is the world ever to know?" asked

Merridew.

"That's what I've come here about," said Anson; "not to give you the description, name, and address of what you'd probably call my microbe, but to tell you a little of what has been accomplished by his means."

"Sam Odgers," said Merridew, "believes

you have a living guinea-pig born nineteen years ago. Old Blyfield has been heard to declare that he's going to live for ever."
"Blyfield's a fool. Too old when I took

Listen." him in hand.

And he told at length the story of his mother—the same story which Farmer Tompkins had heard from Mrs. Anson two days before.

"She is happier now," he said in con-"I have told her that I had no design of putting off death altogether. just used the best means I had to save the life of the person dearest to me on earth. It's the first time, isn't it, parson, that it's been thought criminal to do that?"

"She has discontinued the treatment, I

suppose," said Merridew.

Oh, yes. That is, I have promised never to apply it again. But I haven't data enough yet, Merridew, to say when I think it probable she will die. My bacillus seems, for a modification, to be extraordinarily hardy and consistent. It persists in reproduction."

"You mean, don't you," said Merridew modestly, "that, the supply of immigrants being cut off, you haven't yet history enough to foretell when the early-settler stock will die out?"

"Something like that," said Anson. that's where I am with my dear little mother. And that brings me to my own personal difficulty. Miss Clive and I are—attached."

"The ascetic in love!" murmured the parson. Anson's face flushed so that it

seemed as if he had spoken.

"Well, my dear man," said Merridew, excusing himself, "you are ascetic, and with better excuse than many a saint. You deny yourself for an idea—for a work to be done. You forget yourself too long, instead of remembering yourself too much and too often. And it isn't only yourself, Anson, that you've been forgetting. That charming Miss Clive is a woman. Women hate waste—particularly waste of time. You've been thinking so much of life that you've

forgotten about living. Well?"
"We had agreed," continued Anson awkwardly, "to marry after we had subjected ourselves to the treatment. Having begun this series of experiments in a philosophic spirit—what the newspapers call the ccientific spirit-and not at all in the philanthropic nor in the sociological frame of mind, it seemed our duty to prolong our own lives as far as possible, in order to get the greater opportunity of observing and recording the facts. Now, my few years' work on many animals and a small number of human beings has led me to assume empirically that the best time to start the treatment would be the moment, could one find it, when the human organism begins, as they say, to go down hill, or just before. For each of us-Miss Clive and me-I believe that time has arrived. Neither of us wishes to give up a great idea, but there

are—well, hesitations. "If my work has been worth while, I ought to give myself the chance of observing my method tried upon infancy, upon manhood, and upon the eve of senility. Results on the lower animals begin to show, and, before our 'seventy years and odd' were run, would give us some good records. But with man there's a thing-something that seems more in your line, though I've always ruled your craft out of my business -with man, something rushes in from outside and queers things. My bacilluswhat you called my mutated bacillus—has worked splendidly in the physiological area on four—no, five human subjects, although only exhibited after the definite inception of senility. Psychologically, however, things with those five are in a muddle. My mother's case you know. Her body is actually younger already, and that very thing drove her to doing what she did. Blyfield-well, I couldn't certify him deranged, but I'm afraid he's got a bee in his bonnet. I believe he thinks seas couldn't drown, rocks couldn't crush, nor bullets drill mortal holes in him. The other three men will soon, I think, get just tired. You know your Gulliver?"

"Rather," said Merridew.

"Well, those three old fellows are all right now, but when I imagine another thirty years added to their score, I think of the Struldbrugs in the country of Luggnag."

"Naturally," said Merridew.

"I'm divided between a feeling that I ought to go on and a great distaste. daren't hand over this knowledge undigested to the world, and I can't gather enough data to get at the whole practical truth of it, unless I live to be at least a hundred and thirty years old with undiminished faculties. Miss Clive consents to whatever course I may choose. Perhaps we ought to go on; but my mother has given me an oldfashioned remorse, Blyfield makes me angry, though his folly is, no doubt, my fault, and the other three begin to make me sick. Tell me which to do: follow out my plans for me and Sylvia in our prime, you know, or

drop the whole thing.'

"Drop it," said Merridew. "Hide it. Destroy your cultures and your records, Anson, and get married next week. There's a renewing of life that's greater than the prolongation your brilliant head has invented. If you live long enough to do your best for your children, you've done everything. It's a thing I've never seen done vet.

"What?"

"The best for the new ones."

Anson sat silent, nursing the last quarter

of his cigar.

"Protoplasm," he murmured at last, "is potentially immortal. It's only in these communities of particles of protoplasm which we call organisms that death seems to reign. There's no reason why man need die," he said, his problem turning round on him just when he would have been rid of it.

"Go and live, then," said the parson.

Merridew preached next morning in Beckington Church—rather well, he thought —on the Resurrection.

He wished Anson had been there to hear him. Towards the end of the sermon he caught sight of Miss Clive and little Mrs. Anson; at the back of the nave he could just distinguish the round face of Sam Odgers.

He was quicker than usual in removing his surplice. He wanted to speak with Odgers, whose church-going was infrequent.

Merridew liked his people to stand about and gossip after church. But there were ways and ways of doing this, as of all other things. To-day, as he hurried round to the west door of the church, and before he could see the little crowd between porch and lych-gate, he became aware of an excitement dominated by a loud voice quite out of tune with the usual decorous murmur.

Turning the corner, he saw a forest of heads bent backwards.

The clamant voice came from above.

It came from a man perched in an angle of the church roof-an old man with red cheeks and a flowing white beard, which wagged foolishly as he shouted to the crowd below. It was Blyfield, Anson's patient.

"How did I get here?" he was asking rhetorically, as if the question had been asked. "That's what you'd like to know, isn't it? The means is no matter. Why am I here? Because I am above you all. You little church mice have to crawl inside for your faint, superstitious hunting after immortality. I am here on the roof, because I am immortal already."

Someone cried clearly from the crowd:

"Come down, old man!"

And just then Dr. Anson, coming through the lych-gate, began to make his way through the press round the porch and among the tombstones.

He found himself stopped shoulder to shoulder with Odgers of "The Red Lion."

"You look up to Him you've never seen to make you live for ever. I look down now," roared the madman, "on him that has given me the life eternal!"

And he pointed a definite finger at Anson.

"Yours that you don't know you think greater than yourselves—without beginning and without end. Mine had a beginning, he will have an end. For he has given me the immortality he will not share with me. I cannot die! I live and live! Admire me—look on me—praise me!"

Then the stupefied villagers heard Anson's

voice.

"Mr. Blyfield," it said, "come down!"

"How?" asked the pink cheeks and silly beard, wagging furiously.

"As you went up."

"I flew. I am one of the immortals!"

"Don't fly down, old man," said a kindly humorist. "You'd maybe hurt yourself."

"Go down by the stair of the tower," called Anson, his voice like a slow bell.

"Stair! Tower! Hurt myself! See my immortality! I come to you, friends!"

And the crowd, holding its breath, saw him creep down to the gutter for a foothold. Under the confused roar of remonstrance, Anson heard in his ear: "Old fool!"

"Curse me, not him, Mr. Odgers," he

answered.

Then Blyfield cried, "I cannot die!"

and leapt.

For a horrid moment he twirled in the air, then fell, breaking his back very decently across the gravestone which seemed to have crept too familiarly close to the church.

When Merridew had dispersed the crowd, and the decent dispositions had been made, Odgers, perhaps not by accident, was once more at Anson's elbow. They were on the bridge, peering down in o the stiff, steady eddies. Afterwards Anson remembered the

place; it proved that Odgers had gone by his own house.

"Don't take it hard, sir," said the publican.

"I played with things I didn't understand," said Anson.

"Gosh, sir, I once made a fool drunk a fool that put me on edge, like. I wanted to see what'd happen."

"What did happen?" asked the other

dully.

"He weren't no worse, sir, and I don't know," said Sam, "as he wasn't a bit wiser."

"Where's the comparison?" asked Anson,

wretched and irritable.

"Oh, well, sir," said Odgers softly, "Mr. Blyfield set great store by his immortalness, didn't he? Seems to me like as if he'd taken by accident a sort of short cut to it. Alive, he were pretty dead. But now—well, did you hear Mr. Merridew's sermon, sir?"

Anson shook his head.

"Better ask the parson. He did put it loosid."

Before they parted, Anson shook hands with the innkeeper.

"And look here, sir," said Odgers, before his grasp relaxed, "do you kill that gashly guinea-pig. It gets on my nerves to know it's in the county."

A fortnight later Madely Towers was to let.

A week after that Dr. Philip Anson married Miss Sylvia Clive. They took old Mrs. Anson abroad with them.

Three years later Merridew rode his old cob up to Tompkins, watching the reaping of his most forward field.

"I've had news," said the priest.

Tompkins nodded and said "Ay!"

expectantly.

"Old Mrs. Anson," said Merridew. "Her little grandson fell into a pond. She waded in, and must have had just strength enough to heave him out on the bank, and then fainted back into the water. Anyhow, they found her drowned, and the wet baby howling on the grass."

Tompkins smiled. He wanted to laugh. "She was a sweet old lady," he said

, wetser to

slowly. "I'm glad she carried her bat out."

THE GREY BIRD THAT MOANED

By EDGAR WALLACE

Author of "Sanders of the River," "The People of the River," "Bones," "The Keepers of the King's Peace," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN, A.R.A.

THINK this, lord," said Bosambo of the Ochori, and king of the great territories, "that grief is like a great pool such as the rain leaves, or the river when it floods its banks, and it is so deep that it is higher than a man's head, and you say, 'How can so much water run away? I think it must be here for all time.' But, lord, the sun comes up, and by its magic the waters shrink, and great winds blow some away, and the earth, which is full of little mouths, sucks its share; and presently there is dry land where the water was, though it carries the water-mark for a thousand years."

Sanders nodded and chewed at his dead cigar. Bones, lying back in his basket-chair under the awning of the Zaire, did no more than look at Bosambo, then fell to biting

"Lord, there was a man in the Ochori who had many beautiful gardens filled with wonderful things that you could eat. And because one of these gardens was a little hollow, the rain came down one night and the water was so that a man could take a canoe and row amongst the mealie beds. And this man was so sorrowful, and came so often to watch the pool, that all his other gardens died, for the beasts broke through his bad fences, and the weaver birds took what they liked, because the gardener was looking at the garden which was not, and throwing his face from the garden that was.'

Sanders, his elbow on the rail of the ship,

examined the chief.

"Bosambo," he said, "I think you are wiser than I, for there is a garden which

has been given to me for my care. Some day I will go up to the Old Woman of Limbi, and there will be an end. I pray God that this Old One lives until I come. Bosambo, how long have you smoked cigars?"

He glanced suspiciously at the butt

between Bosambo's fingers.
"Lord," said Bosambo, "for a very long

"I called at the Ochori city on my way up," said Sanders plainly, "and though you were not there, I remember certain things were lost from my cabin, and of these a box of cigars is remembered by me."

"Lord Sandi," said Bosambo indulgently,

"these Ochoris are great thieves."

"I think so," said Sanders drily, and almost smiled.

"This garden is all weeds, I think," said Bones, who had evidently been thinking

upon Bosambo's parable.

"Lord," said Bosambo cheerfully, "all things are weeds until you train them to be vegetables. For were not sweet potatoes weeds cala cala?—so a god-man told me when I was young."

"Bosambo's right," said Sanders. He turned to the king. "You, Bosambo, desire this kingship, and you must have had many serious palavers with yourself.'

"That I have," said Bosambo, "and this is my mind. The people of Tofolaka will fight, being warriors and an uncomfortable people. The people of Bubujala, they also will fight, sending their soldiers into Tofolaka to join Rimilaka. But, lord, in all countries such as this——"

"There is a key state," said Sanders quickly. He used the English phrase, and Bosambo was puzzled. Sanders translated laboriously, and the king's face brightened.

"Truth is here," he said. "For in the old territories, who rose if the Akasava sat down in peace? And in the days when I have brought my people into a warlike spirit, did the Akasava or the Isisi rise? Lord, they knew I was on the frontier of one and on the flank of the other, and they sat quiet. What is the key state here? the Kasala," said Bosambo, shaking his head, "for they are an indifferent people and given to pleasure, though they have fought when the Tofolaka have crossed their line. Nor the Tofolaka, because they are too haughty with their neighbours. Nor the Bubujala men, because they only make war because they fear war."

"You've left the Rimi-Rimi people and

the Fongini."

"Lord, you speak," said Bosambo. "As to the Rimi-Rimi people, they are soft and fear devils too much. I think the Fongini are your men."

Sanders was silent.

"They have a new chief," he said. "I have sent for him, but he has not come."

Yet it was true that Fongini was the key state—a conclusion which as much of its history as he could learn went far to confirm. The Fongini was the one tribe which had defied the Old King and had fought him, with such success that, fearing for his position, he had made a compromise in the matter of taxation and concluded a peace. To that day the Fongini paid only half the tribute exacted from the other tribes. And they had defeated the Tofolaka in one great, bloody battle-somewhere around 1860, so far as Sanders could gather—and they had, too, successfully resisted the nomination of chiefs, which at one period was the Old King's prerogative.

Yet the Fongini were a mild people, so mild and so just in their dealings with men that the killing of Mofolobo, which Sanders had expected would rouse a storm, passed without comment. The people were hunters and workers of steel, and the land was very fertile, save in the year of the drought. Further, all the people were rich with goats and cattle—strange beasts which were never seen south of the mountain.

They were a deceptive people to outside observers, and once in a generation some or the other of their neighbours would hold a palaver and say, "The Fongini are rich and lazy; let us go in and take what we desire,"

and would lay the seeds for a great deal of regret and explanation and humiliation.

Rimilaka, elected by acclaim to be chief of the fighting Tofolaka, counted heads at a council of all the nation, and was proud of

his strength.

"Yes," as he explained to the inner council, "though the Bubujala, our friends and brothers, are with us in six fine regiments, and even the chiefs of Kasala have wished us well, and all the folk of Rimi-Rimi, with the Old King's Guard, will fight for us, the Fongini have sent us neither spears nor corn. Now, this is a shame."

There were many who agreed; there were a few, old men and experienced, who shook their heads and said "Chuk!"

at the mention of the Fongini.

"Lord, we will go on without the Fongini," said the chief's own headman, "for these are bad-tempered people and spiteful; and in the days of my father they made war upon the Tofolaka, and there were many broken huts in the land."

"O ko," said a younger councillor in fine contempt, "the Fongini are cowards, and they say that the men are dying away, so that there are four women to every man, and

those men feeble."

"So they said in the days of my father," said the old headman sardonically. "And where were the fine regiments that went

out to meet them in battle?"

"You talk like an old man," said the other contemptuously. "Now, we young men, whose blood is hot and who are exceedingly brave, we do not remember the past or know of it; and if Rimilaka will send me into the Fongini, I will speak with the chief in a cunning way so that he shall have fear in his heart, knowing that, if he does not fight and the Tofolaka win, his people shall be enslaved to us, and a man of our people shall sit in the chief's place."

The majority of the council thought this an excellent scheme, and M'jibi took a canoe and travelled to a Fongini fishing village, and thence twelve hours through the forest to the Fongini city, where the new chief

had been installed.

It was not a propitious moment for the ambassador. The new chief was also young, being the son of Lubolama, the old chief. There never was so humble and pleasant a man as Bufali when he sought the suffrage of the little chiefs, begging them, by the magic of his father's name, that they make him overlord of the tribe. And when they had elected him, they discovered that they

had elected a tyrant, a glutton, and an evil-doer, who combined the caprices of Heliogabalus with the blood-lust of a Nero. All this M'jibi heard before he came to the city, and was very glad, for this was

Bufali received him kindly, and found

in him a kindred soul.

"You will tell Rimilaka," said Bufali, "that because I love him, and hate the white men who slew my father before the King's fire, I will bring the Fongini and my own fighting regiments, who are the bravest warriors in the world. For I tell you this, M'jibi, that a warrior of the Fongini can live without a heart, and he dies slower than any man in the world."

And to prove this he sent for a soldier of the guard, and had him laid spreadeagled before him, whilst certain of his familiars did terrible things to the soldier. hours before sun-up the king grew tired of waiting for the man to die, and took M'jibi

to his own sumptuous hut.

He was hardly asleep before three little chiefs and a big chief named M'lapa of the Fongini went into the chief's hut and strangled him under M'jibi's fearful eye.

"And if you cry out, man," said the big chief. "we will kill you, too. But if you keep

quiet, we will let you go."

And when the chief was dead, they slipped a noose about M'jibi's head.

"O chief," he whimpered, "you promised

to let me live."
"That was a lie," said the big chief calmly, "being said to keep you quiet."

So they strangled M'jibi, and they threw their bodies in a shameful place, and elected to the chieftainship, a big chief who had

strangled his predecessor.

"Now I think there will be war," said the man. "Therefore let all the spears of the land be called, and the young men do their exercises, such as leaping and dancing and throwing spears until I return."

"Lord, where do you go?" the council

asked him.

"I go to Sandi in the city of Rimi-Rimi," said the chief, "and, by my reckoning, I

go to the stronger man."

News travels fast in primitive countries, and Rimilaka learnt of the death of a possible ally and the election of a certain enemy with something like consternation.

"M'lapa hates me, as I well know," he said thoughtfully. "In the old days, when we sat in the king's city, and he was a small chief, and I was strong with the Old

Man, being a captain of a hundred that guarded his women, I beat this M'lapa, and now I wish I had killed him."

A fortnight passed, and Sanders felt himself growing old with the tension of waiting. The Tofolaka made no sign, and, so far as he could learn, confined their hostilities to the making of intolerable warpalavers. War was in the air; he felt the electric tingle of it, and knew the grand crisis, which would end in the crushing of the rebel forces and the establishment of law in the country, or in his own annihilation, was near at hand.

Hamilton he could not think aboutdared not let his mind rest upon. He almost welcomed the coming struggle for the relief it would give him to that one persistent nightmare—the thought of what Patricia, the dead man's sister, would say.

He blamed himself, which was like Sanders. The thought of Hamilton's fate and his own great loss obsessed him, yet did not make him deviate by one hair's breadth from the plan he had laid down, nor yet come between him and his policy.

That was like Sanders, too.

He went ashore one afternoon with Bones to attend the palaver which Bosambo had called for the judgment of certain delin-They were walking across what Hamilton had called the "parade ground," when Sanders said:

"Do you know, Bones, that other matter

has gone quite from my head?"

"The warning, dear old Excellency?" said Bones, and there was in that "dear old Excellency" a tender quality which made Sanders choke.

"No," he said gruffly. "I was thinking of the girl Ferguson. That tragedy seems so remote, so incidental to this life-God forgive me!—that I never even speculate upon it nowadays."

By this time they were pushing their way through the crowd about the seat of

justice.

Bosambo was a shrewd man and very wise in the ways of litigants. It was his custom on such occasions to sit with a long stick across his knee, and that stick was made of rhinoceros hide, and was a most painful instrument of punishment. It had already served its purpose and reduced litigation to its lowest limits. It had eliminated, too, the petty complainants and those whose chief reason for presenting their cases was the gift of oratory.

Bosambo gave swift justice, and swiftly

were the cases presented. The man who committed an offence in the morning went smarting to bed. A dispute which arose at mid-day was settled by sunset. These daily justice courts of Bosambo served yet another purpose. Strangers to the city, headmen and little chiefs of outlying villages, came in to discover what manner of justice was given, and of late these informal commissions of inquiry had come from as far afield as Lower Bubujala.

Men sometimes came for particulars of the new government, and these were informative, for they showed Sanders that something of the old fear and terror associated with the Old King's reign had disappeared. On this particular morning came a new kind of applicant. When the palaver had finished, and such questions had been answered as "How many sides are there to this world?" and the like, a man arose who, by his cloak, his girdle of monkey tails, and his sword, was clearly a fighting chief, and as clearly a stranger from northern Rimi-Rimi, as he had a fillet of plaited straw about his head, such as the northern people wear

"Lord," he said, "the people of my village have heard of the wonders which the white lord has brought, especially of the Birds of Grey that moan, and because they live in this village and in the king's house, also on the great ship of Sandi, and are not wild, but come to the hands of men, my people think they are spirits. Now, lord, I desire one such bird, that I may take him to my village and worship him, and presently he shall come to my hand also, and I shall be glad."

He addressed Bosambo, but it was Sanders, sitting on the right hand of the king, who answered. It was a curious request, but it had been made before in the old territories. For these Government pigeons were very mysterious to the native mind. It was said that they were the spirits of dead Houssas, and those who had seen them in their swift flight, carrying messages between Sanders and his subordinates, had invested them with other magical qualities.

"I would give you many things, chief," said Sanders, "but not these, for they are the little servants of the Many-Thinking-As-One." (Thus he translated the League.)

As-One." (Thus he translated the League.)
"Lord," said the man earnestly, "I
would not ask this for a gift, because that
would be shameful, but I have brought as
the price a great tooth of ivory."

Sanders looked at him in astonishment,

because, whatever fallacious values the native may have, he has no illusions as to the worth of ivory, and this man was offering twenty pounds for a bird that was worth five shillings.

"These things are not to be sold, chief," said Sanders gently. "But presently, when I come back on my fine ship, I will send you a grey one who moans, and you shall be

satisfied."

The man was certainly not satisfied now, for he grew agitated with the refusal.

"There is nothing in my house that I will not give you," he said. "Now, I have ten goats, which is the price of a good wife, and this I will give you for your little bird."

Sanders laughed at the man's persistence. "O friend," he said, "is it not said in this land that a good wife does all things but fly? Now, I think you had better buy a wife with your goats, for this bird I will not sell"

Later Sanders thought the matter over, and the more he thought, the more puzzled he was

"They're a queer people, these," he said, and looked aloft to the wooden cote which had been hoisted to the mast of the Zaire. One of the greatly desired pigeons was preening himself on the roof of his home; another was circling with slow, wide sweeps in the blue above, locating his home in the way of a wise pigeon.

"I shall transfer these to Bosambo," he said. "We may be going off at any moment, and they will find a difficulty in getting

back."

News came late in the day that four big canoes were coming from the direction of the Fongini country, and towards evening they appeared, the leading boat making straight for the ship.

Sanders watched the approaching flotilla through his glasses, and saw that it carried someone whose importance was advertised by the gay colouring of the awning under

which the visitor sat.

"This, I think, is the Fongini chief," he said, with a sigh of relief, "which makes matters a little curious, Bones."

"Who is he, sir?" asked Bones.

"Heaven knows," replied Sanders, "for the chiefs are rising up and falling down quicker than I can count them."

He went to the gangway as the canoe came alongside, and presently one came up who had a white cloth about his shoulders, and the edge of that cloth was dyed purple.

"O chief, I see you," said Sanders.



"He came back to Sanders, trembling with excitement, and in his hand was a pigeon."

" Now, I am glad you have come, for you were one of the Old King's great council

of war."

"Lord," said M'lapa, "your ears are greater than elephants', for you have heard this thing. And it is true that I sat in the Old Man's palaver house on big days. Therefore do I wear a white cloth with this beautiful colour upon it, the same as the Old King's coat."

Sanders smiled within himself, and led

the way to the aft-deck.

"Now, M'lapa, we will talk," he said, " for I see you are a chief, and I think you

are chief of the Fongini."
"There is truth," said the chief, sitting down upon the deck at a sign from Sanders, "for he who was chief is dead, and I will tell you no twisted stories, but the truth itself. For he was a wicked man, having this and that and the other vices "-he specified them, and Sanders was not shocked -" so we went into his fine house one night, and we put a thong about his neck, and he said 'Ugh!' and died. Also we killed one who was with him, being the secret man of Rimilaka, the chief of the Tofolaka, who desired war with you and your tribe.'

"That is good news for me," said Sanders. "But hear this, M'lapa-that from this day on there shall be no killing palaver in your country; and if any man do evil, he shall come to me, and if it be great, great evil, he shall die, for there cannot be two

killers in one country."

"So I think," said M'lapa readily. would wish that these high matters were taken from my hands. Now, Sandi, I am strong for you and all my people, and I have called my spears together to go against the Tofolaka."

Sanders's heart leapt, for the miracle for which he had prayed had happened. key state had declared on his side, and the future of the country was assured.

"O M'lapa," he said, "this is a great thing you have told me, and I will send for

the king, Bosambo."

Bosambo came in haste, and the two giants met-M'lapa was only a few inches

shorter than his new lord.

"See this man," said Sanders, "for he is strong for you. Hear him kindly. Now hear me! Because of his loyalty and friendship, he shall be second to you in this land, and shall hold Fongini for you and your people."

Bosambo held out both his hands, and

M'lapa laid his upon them.

"What tribute do your people send the king, M'lapa?" asked Bosambo, a very

practical man.

"Lord, since the beginning of the world they have sent half the tribute which other lands have sent," said M'lapa, "also five regiments in all great wars. Also, lord, we have the right of fishing upon the shores of the northern Tofolaka, who are lazy people and bad fishermen."

So Bosambo in conventional language confirmed the rights and privileges of the Fongini, and the two men ate salt, and cut each his forearm and rubbed the cuts together so that the blood mingled, and Bosambo gave the chief a wonderful cloak of furs and a looking-glass, both of which were unaccountably missing when the chief came to take his departure.

"These will I find and send on to you, M'lapa," said Bosambo soberly, "also many other beautiful presents which I have

in my house."

The night had come, and the half moon was riding in the sky, when the chief took his departure and Bosambo went home to his hut.

"How did you know that fellow sat in the council of the Old King?" asked Bones.

"By the purple edging on his cloak," said Sanders quietly. "Didn't I tell you that all these people are descendants of old Roman adventurers?"

"Then—" began Bones.

"The purple stripe on the white toga was the insignia of a senator. I'm afraid you're not very well up in Roman history, Bones."

"I don't know so much about that, sir," said Bones, with something of his old spirit, but he lacked the provocation which Hamilton offered, and relapsed into silence.

At half-past eleven he went to his cabin and lay down on the bed. In these days he did not undress, though the nights were warm, being content to take off his boots and his coat. He was dozing, when there came a tap at the door, and he swung out of his bed in a second.

'Abiboo knocks, lord," said a low voice, and pulled back the door. "Lord," said the sergeant-major of Houssas, "this I found by the little ladder which comes from the

water."

He held up a wet cloth.

"What thing is this?" asked Bones.

"Lord, it is such a thing as the men of this country wear about their waists, and it is wet."

"There's a stranger on board," said Bones, and took up his revolver and a flash-lamp.

"The sentries have heard nothing, and these men I trust," said Abiboo, "being

people of my own family."

The upper deck of the Zaire was, save for the space aft, made up of two narrow alleyways and the spacious cabin which the officers occupied. Amidships was poor Hamilton's cabin, and as Bones walked along he gasped, for the door of the cabin was open, and it had been locked. Indeed, it had been locked by Hamilton himself, and when Bones had made an attempt to take an inventory of his comrade's kit, he discovered that none of his keys would fit the door, and an entrance had to be made through the open window. Now the door was wide open.

Bones stepped in and switched on the light. Somebody had been in here. A box had been broken open and its contents had

been thrown out on the floor.

"O ko," said Abiboo, "this is robbery. I swear to you, lord, that my men are honest."

Bones was trying to think what was in that box. He had made a list of its contents. He went back and aroused Sanders, and told him what had happened, and Sanders came along in his pyjamas to investigate. Bones joined him later, after going to his cabin to get the list he had made and which he had still.

"Here you are," said Bones. "Black box." And he enumerated its contents, with the object of checking the articles on the floor with the list in his hand.

"One small brown box, locked," he read.

"That's gone."

"What did it contain?" asked Sanders. "I'm blessed if I know, Excellency," said Bones. "I hadn't a key that would fit the lock."

Sanders was puzzled.

"It's extraordinary," he said. door of the cabin seems to have been opened without forcing. It's the first time I have heard of a native burglar. Nothing else is missing?"

Bones made a rapid survey, pulling open

drawers and unlocking boxes.
"No, sir," he replied, shaking his head in wonder. "The thief must have gone straight for this box. Probably it was the first he came upon."

Abiboo, who had gone out to question

his sentries, returned.

"Lord," he said in a troubled voice, " on

the high mast behind your lordship's cabin we found wet marks, and also, it seems, one of your pretty birds of grey, Mimi, who lays beautiful eggs, has gone, for the door of their little house, which we pull up at night because of the hawks, has been broken open."

The two men looked at each other in

amazement.

"Did the sentry hear nothing?"

"Lord, he heard only the grey birds talking angrily, but thought it was a nighthawk who had alarmed them."

A diligent search of the ship revealed nothing. Yoka, the engineer, who slept by his engine, had not been disturbed, and, but for the waist-cloth in the gangway and the wet marks on the mast, the visitor had left no clue as to his identity.

"My theory is, dear old Excellency," said Bones, "there's a fellow got on board

secretly, climbed the mast-

"Oh, Bones"—Sanders dropped his hand on Bones's hard shoulder and squeezed it affectionately—"only poor Hamilton could have given an adequate rejoinder to that."

Bones shut up so quickly that Sanders

was sorry.

The next morning he sent for the chief who had desired to buy the Grey Bird that Moans, but he had gone overnight, some said, though nobody had seen him pass through the adjoining villages. This fact, however, did not impress Sanders, for the people seemed to have a scientific system of silence where the movements and doings of important people were concerned, and he discovered that from one end of the country to the other it was the practice, when something disagreeable happened which the chiefs desired to go no further, to call the villagers together and recite to

"Who saw this?" To which they answered

"No eyes."

"Who heard this?" "No ears."

"What has happened?" "Nothing." The weather broke, and there were three days of dismal rain, during which the two men found time hanging heavily on their hands and the tension of the situation growing intolerable. On the fourth day the clouds cleared and the sun came up, dispersing the heavy mist which lay on the river, and that day promised to be as uninteresting as its fellows, but at two in the afternoon a message came to Sanders which set the bugles blowing.

"I want full steam, Bones," said the Administrator. "Six hundred canoes from the Tofolaka coast are within a dozen miles."

Bones saluted.

"Shrapnel, I suppose, sir?"

Sanders nodded.

Portable machine-guns were mounted on the tops of the cabins, ammunition lockers were opened, and an extra supply of small-arm ammunition was served out to the men. Then down the middle of the river steamed the Zaire, her blue ensign flying.

Five miles south of the city the Zaire came in sight of the fleet, and Sanders saw the river speckled red with brightly coloured

"Gentlemen," said Bones, his shoulder at the rubber feet of the gun, his eye glinting along the sights, "the toast of the evening is 'Sweethearts and wives!'"

And the first gun crashed forth.

"A thousand yards, O Ahmet!" called Bones to the man at the second gun.

"Now fire quickly!"

The two Hotchkiss guns banged and crashed and echoed, the "ha-ha-ha" of the Maxim piercing the infernal din. handed over his gun to a competent man, and ran along the deck to give his soldiers a final look over.

"O man," he said to one who fingered a Mills bomb gingerly, "if you jiggle that little pin from that little hole, I think you will be

" Lord captain, I do not understand these little devils," said the soldier, and Bones very wisely relieved him of his very dan-

gerous possession.

The flotilla of canoes was now in disorder; white puffs of smoke lay over them, and every second added a new burst. The river was filled with swimming men and men who could not swim. And then, when the bow of the Zaire seemed likely to draw level with the nearest boat, the canoes began to paddle frantically to the land.

"The Bubujala shore, thank Heaven!" said Sanders. "Shell the beach, Bones, and cease fire as soon as they're out of sight."

When the firing had ceased, "Take a party ashore and destroy the canoes,"

said Sanders. "I think that will settle the business for the time being."

The Zaire was moving about when Abiboo, frantic with excitement, flew on to the aft deck and gripped Sanders unceremoniously by the arm.
"O man," said Sanders, astonished,

" what is this shameful thing?"

"Lord," gasped the Houssa sergeantmajor, "Mimi-I have seen the beautiful

"Mimi!" said Sanders in astonishment, and then remembered the filched pigeon. He looked up, shading his eyes. Above, there was a tiny blue speck that was sweeping downward in a long spiral plane. Presently it dropped to the board of the dovecote, and Abiboo went up the ladder by the mast, hand over hand. He came back to Sanders, trembling with excitement, and in his hand was a pigeon.

"Lord, it is she," he said exultantly. " Now I know how clever are the grey ones, for when the wicked chief released her, behold! she came back to us who are her

Sanders took the bird and uttered an exclamation, for about its leg, tied with a thin piece of native skin, was a paper. He unfastened the string with trembling fingers.

"What's this, Excellency?" asked Bones.

" From Bosambo?"

Sanders did not reply. He opened the paper and peered down at it. The message was written in pencil and was faint.

"South of Rimi-Rimi seventy miles. Fishing village Tonkini. Joining you there."

There was no signature.

Bones, looking over his chief's shoulder, snatched the paper from his hand unceremoniously, and, raising his head, emitted a yell of joy.
"Hamilton!" he roared.

"Hamilton!" gasped Sanders. "Idon't

recognise the hand."

"Hamilton!" shouted Bones, prancing up and down the deck in a wild war dance. "Hamilton!" he said incoherently. "Dear old Ham—never could spell! 'joining' without a 'y,' dear old Excellency!"



M. ALONSO. Note the position of the forefinger.

STROKES AND **STANCE**

F. GORDON LOWE

Photographs by Sport & General

N writing of strokes at lawn tennis, I do not consider that any hard-andfast rules can be laid down as to their execution, but the salient principles governing their production can be given. The game is to beat your opponent, and to do this it is necessary to hit your return into your enemy's court where he is not, or to make him miss it. The leading exponents of the

game in many countries, who have competed at Wimbledon of recent years, have demonstrated this by various methods of stroke production. They have shown beyond question that one way is as good as another, as long as you can do it.

In the training of youngsters I would not try to alter their natural strokes into some stereotyped style, but rather to develop their original shots on more or less the right lines. It will generally be found that imitation is always a characteristic of the young, and that the strokes of the players of various nations can be traced to the present or late champion of their respective countries. With us it is still the Dohertys who influence our style; in Australia it is Norman Brookes, whose attacking methods and backhand, played with the same face of the racket as the forehand, are clearly demonstrated in the play of the present Australian team now in America, especially that of Peach, Todd, and Hawkes. France has Gobert's easy and graceful strokes to copy. Tilden and Johnstone undoubtedly learnt their all-round play from the combination of the strokes of Lained and McLoughlin.



MDLLE. LENGLEN.

National characteristics also are brought out in stroke production. Perhaps we err on the side of caution, but have stoical defence. Americans have thoroughness and hustle, France has brilliance. Climatic conditions and surface are often responsible for good or bad strokes. The average grass courts in England are so untrue that most players in this country have to poke at the ball, generally at the last moment, to get it over at all. Very different are the perfect hard courts of France, on which a clean swinging drive can be cultivated with no fear of false bounds. Oh, for more of these in England, to give our rising players a chance!

In my opinion, as long as the following rules are observed, the

same results will be obtained by different stroke actions:-

1. Keep the eye on the ball as long as possible before impact.

2. Let your follow-through be unchecked, finishing with your racket pointing to where your return has been directed.

3. Do not swing the racket far back before striking.

4. Hit the ball at the top of the bound or before.

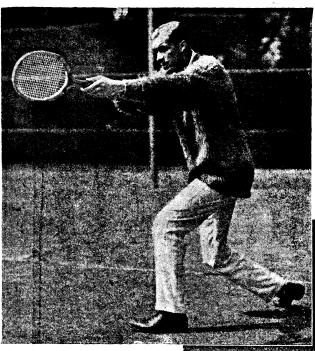
5. Keep the head of the racket above the wrist or, at any rate, never very much below it.

6. Remember that it is not strength, but perfect timing, body-swing, and followthrough that produce pace.

In producing strokes, some



MRS. BEAMISH.

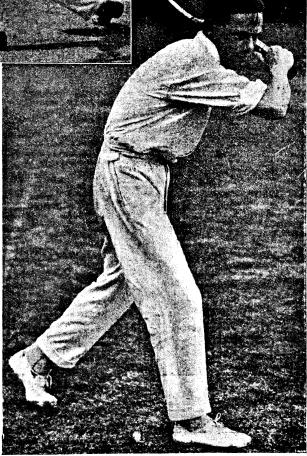


W. T. TILDEN.

players use mostly their wrists, as perhaps Ritchie does, others a straight arm, as Gore did, and Brookes plays with his elbow bent, which is best for volleying. Personally, I like to see the wrist and arm working in perfect unison. What better example of this could there be than Mdlle. Lenglen?

Various actions of strokes are dependable to a great extent on grip. The racket can be held with an open face; thus a perfectly clean-hit ball is the result. I do not think I saw any player at Wimbledon use this stroke, unless perhaps Tilden once or twice. S. H. Smith was an expert. To obtain "top," the racket must be gripped with the striking face at an angle pointing towards the ground, making it necessary to hit the ball with an upward movement to get it over the net. This is the most generally used method, and is best illustrated by the

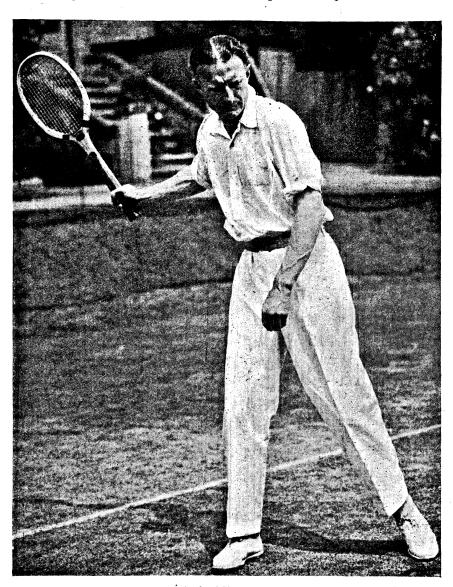
polished drives and thrusts of Alonso, who uses a curious grip, his forefinger gripping the racket very much apart from the other three. H. L. Doherty was in favour of this. For the "cut" or "chop "stroke, the striking face of the racket should be pointing slightly away from the ground; thus a downward movement of the racket is required when striking. Miss Ryan is, of course, proficient at this stroke.



B. I. C. NORTON.

Shimidzu is the exception, and holds his racket somewhat in this manner, but gets top on the ball by turning his wrist right over for the forehand. It is an extraordinary stroke, and makes him vulnerable on low bounding and short balls. With

kind of stroke to come in on, as there is always a slight swerve on the ball, and the bound is inclined to "slither." Mrs. Larcombe has this stroke to perfection; Kingscote also uses it, striking with both "drag" and "top."

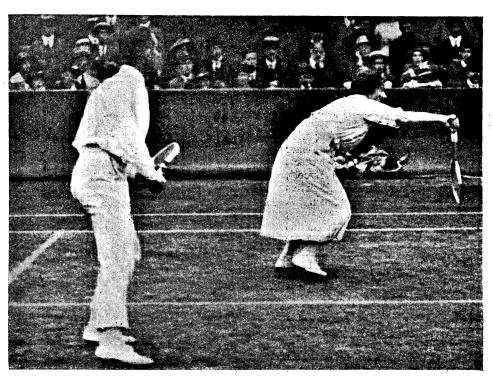


F. GORDON LOWE.
Stance at the beginning of a forehand stroke.

grip unchanged, his backhand is more orthodox.

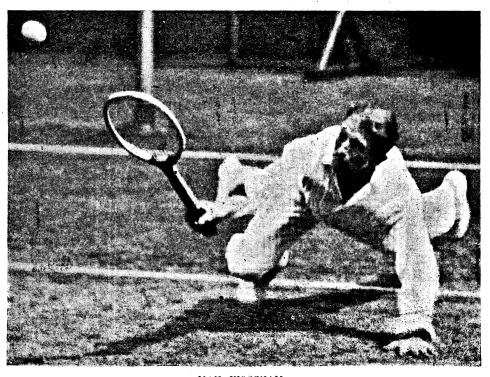
Another way of stroke production is to draw the racket across the ball, thus imparting "slice" or "drag." This is a good

Serving and smashing should be identical. Tilden gets the maximum speed—especially with his fast straight service—with the minimum of effort, and does not go in for unnecessary swinging. The same action



MISS RYAN AND R. LYCETT WINNING THE MIXED DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP.

Note Lycett's position a little behind his partner.

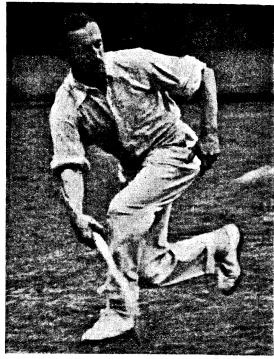


MAX WOOSNAM.

The player has fallen, but plays his stroke from the ground.

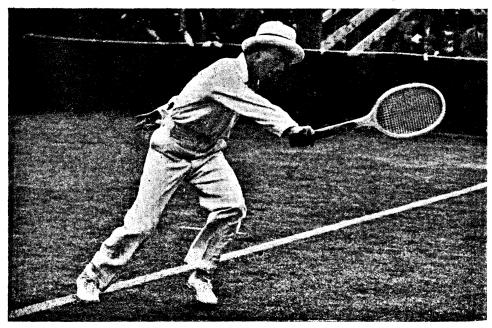
should be employed for smashing as a cricketer uses in throwing a cricket ball, as is seen, for instance, in the method of Lycett. English players are weak overhead, a defect which could easily be eradicated by practising smashing lobs for twenty minutes every day. I favour smashing with the open face of the racket, as Fisher and Doust do; but most experts smash with closed face, as Lycett, Alonso, and Gobert, do. Shimidzu has an effective "reverse" smash. A volley should be executed by a push, stab, or thrust stroke. The Australians use the same face of the racket for all volleys, which I think is the best. The player who can command all these strokes is the ideal one. Tilden of 1920 came nearest to it; it was never possible to tell which stroke he was going to employ in his return —he was full of surprises. Perhaps Norton will one day be the same. Fisher is unorthodox, and is an example of how approved theories of the game can be set at naught and yet prove successful.

I would divide stance into three heads: (a) Footwork; (b) position during strokes; (c) position on court. Stance is



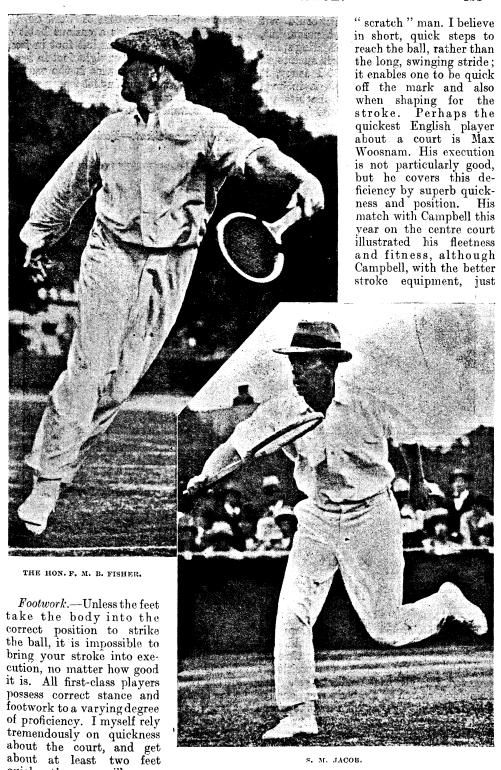
MAJOR A. R. F. KINGSCOTE.

one of the most important features of the game, if not the most.



Z. SHIMIDZU, THE JAPANESE PLAYER.

Note the forehand grip.



quicker than, we will say, a

Note the finish of a forehand drive made on the run.

won. Miss Ryan's footwork could not be described as her strongest point, but, combined with her wonderful fighting spirit, it suffices to carry her through against all except Mille. Lenglen, when, I fancy, it lets her down. Mrs. Beamish is inclined to give a little jump before she hits the ball, which spoils otherwise good footwork.

ball, which spoils otherwise good footwork.

Position during Strokes.—The position of
the body should, when there is time, be

swerve and a good deal of work on the ball. Mrs. O'Neill has a curious habit of serving her first with her left foot in front and her second with her right foot in front. Alonso's stance for service is the weakest part of his game—turning his feet in and his back on his opponent; the finished article is not commensurate with the effort expended.

Position on Court.—Position on the court



MRS. LARCOMBE.

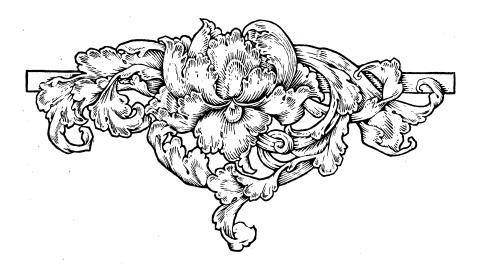
sideways to the net, and for all forehand strokes the weight of the body should start on the right leg, and be swung through on to the left at the finish. The position is reversed for all backhand strokes. The swinging through of the body from one leg to the other with your stroke helps to create the pace on the ball without pressing. My brother, A. H. Lowe, has a fine service, and adopts an unusual stance by serving on to the right leg instead of the left, as most players do. This method produces a

is all-important. In singles the inherent base-liners, such as Shimidzu, Jacob, Ritchie, and myself, will stand slightly behind the base-line, darting from side to side, picking up balls from impossible angles (these strokes the base-liner likes best), and returning always to the centre of the court between the rallies. Volleys are often employed, especially by Jacob and Shimidzu, as a means of finishing off a weak return. The volleyers, such as Brookes, Fisher, or Doust, hope to make their point in three strokes,

if not two. Brookes follows in his serve. but does not, as a rule, reach the net soon enough to kill his first volley, which is generally deep and well placed. He again follows in this volley closer still to the net and kills the next return. Brookes stands a yard from the service line to take the This is certainly an excellent service. position. Valuable time is gained; your opponent can only get half-way to the net before your return is at his feet — the most impossible position to allow yourself to be caught in at lawn tennis. Wilding showed this when he beat McLoughlin in 1913. The men who, like Tilden, Norton, Alonso, Kingscote, and Lycett, can blend sound ground play with purposeful volleying are the ones who can make the most of every suitable position offered by the game. In

doubles always be in a position to hit down. Make for the net whenever you can; the half-way position is fatal, making what should be an easy kill into a most difficult stroke. I believe in one volleyer, the quicker of the two, being a little nearer the net, as H. L. Doherty was to "R. F.," and as Miss Ryan generally is to Lycett; it seems to work better. The pair receiving service should keep parallel formation, working for the net position together, unless their returns are superlative, when the player not receiving may stand close up to the net.

One last word: Mdlle. Lenglen, who today holds, as a woman, precisely the place that, as a man, H. L. Doherty occupied in a bygone day in the game of lawn tennis, possesses the most graceful stance and perfect stroke production of her generation.



THE NET-MENDER.

WHERE in dim shelter the scarred fishing-boats, With chains and weeds, in shafted sunshine lie, Mending the nets she sings. Her laughter floats

To me, above her head low-bent and shy.

The ships that go out to deep waters are
Her sisters. In swift nets her fingers ply
Like birds adown the coasts, and like a star

Shines her gold head against the patient sky.
In her small cottage, sitting every night,
I see her sewing. Oh, the mystery

Of her warm kitchen in the tawny light,
Her little head against the window high!

C. M. A. OMAN.

IMMEDIATE POSSESSION

By REX COLVILE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

"H," breathed significant Mrs. Goodnutt, pantingly ecstatic, as a fullblown white rose is ecstatic in the first ruffling breeze of summer—"oh, do read that bit again, Bert! I think it's my favourite of 'em all; it's so lit'rary and yet so refined."

Her insignificant husband—insignificant only if one excludes his Adam's apple—lowered his head over the open album of press notices and eagerly obeyed her.

"'. . . To us the performance of Professor Psycho, the Great Illusionist, and of Babette, the Child Wonder, was a revelation. seemed to us well-nigh incredible that a child of such tender years as Babette flaxen-haired, white-socked, her big blue eyes pools of youthful innocence—could, in her brief existence, have so perfected herself in the art and craft of her profession as to defy the skilled scrutiny of those local gentlemen who, at the Professor's request, mounted the platform with the avowed purpose of detecting a flaw in her performance. They found none. We have nothing but awed admiration for the Professor and his Child Wonder.'

Mrs. Goodnutt's one or two jolly chins curtsied as she chuckled her appreciation.

"What's the date of that one, Bert?" she asked complacently.

Mr. Goodnutt peered close at the news-

paper cutting.

"Just six years ago," he said; "it's from The Chubb-in-the-Wold Sentinel. Yes, I remember we did remarkably well at Chubb-in-the-Wold; your floating in the air, without a head and any visible means of support, knocked 'em a treat." He sighed. "But that was before the cinema came," he added vindictively. "The . . . the . . . Cinema!" An expression of futile fury had suddenly contorted his face: the cinema alone had power to conjure this up: the

cinema had caused Professor Psycho and the Child Wonder to retire five years before they

desired to do so.

"Now, now," soothed Mrs. Goodnutt, "don't work yourself up, Bert, because there ain't no call for it. Remember that at the time the young man on *The Chubb-in-the-Wold Sentinel* wrote that lovely notice about me being a child of innocent years, I was just turned forty-four."

Mr. Goodnutt looked at her adoringly. He was two years younger than she, and they had been married twenty-five years, but to him she would always be a Child Wonder. And to her he would always be the Great Illusionist—that is to say, the

Constant Lover.

"It was time for us to settle down," continued Mrs. Goodnutt comfortably; "and although I must honestly and freely confess that I enjoy sometimes reading over the printed pieces about our triumphs of yore, so to speak, I never regret 'aving retired—especially now that we're so snug and happy in this dear old Jacobsomething cottage, with just enough to live on, and you so wrapped up in 'ens, and me so interested in me garden . . ."

" Hi!"

The placid flow of Mrs. Goodnutt's serenity was dammed in full flood. Mr. Goodnutt—who, since abandoning the professional startling of the public, was himself very easily startled—slipped instantly off the edge of the big wicker chair which, placed in the porch, he was inadequately sharing with his wife, and reached the ground with a bump. Mrs. Goodnutt, with great presence of mind, saved the album from a similar fate—she was very proud of both—but was too late to save Bert.

"Hi! You!" cried the voice in a tone of

angry command.

Mr. Goodnutt arose and twitteringly gazed toward the garden gate.

"Yes?" he gasped. "I—I'm coming."

"The sort of man that's a nuisance on a platform as a volunteer witness," muttered Mrs. Goodnutt, critically professional, as her husband hastened down the gravelled path to the gate, on the other side of which, flanked by the most glittering and expensive type of limousine, a large man-large all over, but, even so, obviously not so large as his conception of his own importance-stood and chafed at the momentary delay.

"All this," said the large man, as Mr. Goodnutt approached him-" how much?"

Mr. Goodnutt's bewildered expression and rather meaningless snigger made the large

man more pouncingly super-mannish.
"The 'ole place," he snapped, "as it stands—'ow much? Eliza-beth-i-an, isn't

it ? "

"Jacobean," faltered Mr. Goodnutt.

"That's what I meant. Well, 'ow much? Immediate possession, mind you. don't think we're going to pay no fancy price, because me and Mrs. Gubb aren't mugs even if we are rich." And he glanced leeringly over his shoulder at his furred and feathered mate, who, lolling aristocratically in the gorgeously upholstered tonneau of the car, returned his clever look from bistred but covetous eyes.

"I—I'm afraid I don't understand," faltered Mr. Goodnutt. But what he meant was, "I'm afraid to understand," because the large man's meaning was revoltingly

apparent.

The furred and feathered lady within the tonneau of the car barked a short, sceptical laugh, and the large man made a sneering noise with his nose. "Aren't I plain enough?" he asked. "Well, then, fair and square, 'ow much do you want for this little lot?"

Over his shoulder Mr. Goodnutt threw a fleeting glance at his wife; in the days gone by they had established a perfect system of wireless. Mrs. Goodnutt caught the question adroitly and flashed back the verbal message: "Tell the gentleman this place don't belong

to us, Bert. Give him the address of Mr. Ruckles, the owner."

Mr. Goodnutt, though bewildered, choked back the unconvincing lie he was about to proffer, and did his wife's bidding. always had known best.

"Oh," said the large man, "that's it, is it? You've not got a lease, 'ave

you ? "

"No," confessed Mr. Goodnutt; "we

-we're only quarterly tenants."

The large man smiled—not a pleasant smile, the smile that twists the lips (sometimes nothing more than an anticipatory twitch) of every preying animal when it has its victim where it wants it. Within the car's tonneau the furred and feathered lady made a curious gesture with her hands—she was shooting out her claws.

"Good day," said the large man with

extreme heartiness.

"Good afternoon," said the furred and feathered lady in the tonneau, silkily smooth.

Mr. Goodnutt bowed jerkily. The car purred, stretched itself, purred again more

foudly, spat once, and was gone.

With a pathetic cry of "Babs!" Mr. Goodnutt turned and ran up the path. But Mrs. Goodnutt did not seem to be perturbed. She smiled and waved her hand.

"Don't worry, Bert," she called; "we're

still 'ere, so far.' II.

Mr. Ruckles, the retired publican—who owned (what he called) "considerable ouse prop'ty" in the neighbourhood (the old Jacobean cottage was the smallest and least desirable part of it)—looked at Mr. and Mrs. Gubb as though he loved them. He was not dissembling; he looked as he felt—he really did love them. He loved them as a normal hungry boy loves a tree, just within tip-toe reach, laden with ripe fruit. Mr. Ruckles had an overmastering desire to pick Mr. and Mrs. Gubb.

"The fact is," said Mr. Gubb candidly candour was his strong suit; it had carried him through many a War deal with unimaginative officials)—"me and Mrs. Gubb has taken a fancy to the little place. want it as a bee-jew residence for week-ends, and we're willing to buy outright, s'long as we can have immediate possession.

What about it?"

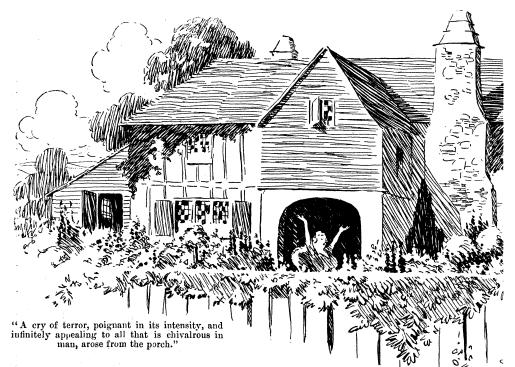
Mr. Ruckles pursed his lips. The Jacobean cottage was shockingly old-fashioned, it had no bathroom, it wasn't on the drains, gas wasn't laid on-it was, in fact, a white helephant."

"I'd like to oblige you--" he began

diplomatically, in the stale way.

But Mrs. Gubb, who was still feathered, but not quite so furred—for it was warm within Mr. Ruckles's red villa-jerked her head haughtily.

"Not so much of the oblige, mister," "We're willing to pay, you she said. know."



"A fair price, taking into con-sid-er-ation a-what's against it," added Mr. Gubb in his best contract-wangling manner.

Mr. Ruckles pretended to ponder. In reality he was deciding that it would be a sheer sin merely to pick these ripe Gubbs—

he must strip them.

"Well," he said at last, with the utmost frankness, "I'll tell you exactly 'ow I'm The present tenants of the valuable and picturesque old cottage which has very natch-rally attracted your artistic attention can demand three months' notice to quit, and at the expiration of that time I can't turn 'em out unless they can obtain suitable accommodation elsewhere: it's a crying shame, but it's the law. And I've always 'ad a respect for the law, and always, I s'pose, will 'ave. But . . ."

Mr. and Mrs. Gubb released joint and several sighs of relief. Somehow they had sensed, and waited for, this dawning "but . . ." Mr. Ruckles sucked at his teeth, implying doubt and weighty con-

sideration.

"It might be—ah—done," he admitted uneasily, suggesting deftly faint but persistent prickings of conscience.

"Four thousand down," said Mr. Gubb in

the grand manner.

"It shall be done," amended Mr. Ruckles brightly, the prickings now permanently allayed.

Mr. and Mrs. Gubb arose. Mr. Ruckles shook hands with them effusively.

"After all," insinuated, "a little old-world gem of a place like that is lost, utterly lostthrown away on them Goodnutts."

"They don't deserve it," said Mr. Gubb judicially. "Fair's fair is my motto;

they do not deserve it."

Mrs. Gubb rolled her shoulders. She had no patience with the way men tried to justify their deeds; her own attitude in affairs was very simple: if you 'ad the money, you did what you wanted, and if you 'adn't, you didn't.

"They won't get it, anyway," she snapped. "Within a fortnit I'll 'ave me phonygrarft in the front parlour and the telephone connected, you see if I don't."

Mr. Ruckles conducted his more-thanfriends to the front door-shiny, grained, and heavily beknockered.

"'Ow are you going to work it?"

whispered Mr. Gubb huskily.

Mr. Ruckles's answer was given with the eye alone.

Ha, ha!" applauded Mr. Gubb. The



quite clearly: "Don't be too

inquisitive, but leave it to me to trick the tenants into giving you immediate possession." And Mr. Gubb was content so to leave it.

Mr. Ruckles was not the man to waste time, especially when there were four thousand reasons for dispatch. No sooner had the Gubb chariot rolled richly away than he clapped a hat on his head and started quickly, unswervingly-hot on the fresh money scent—for the old cottage.

anticipated little opposition from the Goodnutts-they were a colourless, gullible couple-but, if the worst came to the worst, he could, of course, offer them a hundred pounds to clear out at once, and still show a wide margin of profit. But his confident hope was that the worst would stay remote from the worst. He had cause for this hope; for while Mr. Gubb had been talking so fascinatingly about four thousand pounds, someone (probably Providence. always straining on the leash to assist the already too rich) had dropped into the fertile soil of Mr. Ruckles's brain a little seed of inspiration, which in a trice had magically developed into a splendid wangle-tree. Long, long ago, before Mr. Ruckles retired from business, or the Gubbs came out of the East, there had existed vague, picturesque, and quite unsubstantiated rumours of the old Jacobean cottage being haunted; and it was this mythical haunting which had blossomed and fructified from the tiny seed of the wangle-tree. Mr. Ruckles would work this rumour for all it was worth-say, four thousand pounds.

"Hello, hello!" he cried cheerily over the garden gate of his tenants' cottage. "'Ow are you? "His narrowed eyes, his predatory nose, and trap mouth contradicted the cheeriness of his voice,

but he could not help this.

Mrs. Goodnutt was still in the wicker chair in the porch. Mr. Goodnutt, squatting upon a housemaid's-kneeler, was shuffling down the gravelled path, weeding spasmodically

"Thank you, thank you," he responded stily. "We—we are both quite well, Mr. Ruckles. Quite well. Are we not,

Babs?"

"Quite," called Mrs. Goodnutt, pantingly flustered and grateful for kind inquiries, "quite well; and it's very gentlemanly of Mr. Ruckles to ask, I'm sure. Isn't it, Bert?"

"Very," agreed her husband, rising gingerly-rheumatism's no disgrace-from the kneeler and approaching the gate. "Very kind indeed. Won't you come in, Mr.

Mr. Ruckles shook his head mysteriously. Once again he had recourse to the Esperanto

of the eye. He winked ominously.

"No, thanks," he said, lowering his voice. "I just wanted to 'ave a word with you as man to man. No need to alarm the wife, you know. Women are easily alarmed. We men are different—sterner stuff. Got steadier nerves, 'aven't we?"

"Ye-es," agreed Mr. Goodnutt, anxiously and obviously giving himself the lie by the fluttering of his hands and the twitching of his brows. "B-but what is it, Mr. Ruckles?

Wh-at's the—the matter?"

Mr. Ruckles's voice sank to the most

sympathetic of whispers.

"You're quite comfortable 'ere?" he asked. "I mean to say you're-you're not disturbed or annoyed by anything at dead of night?"

Mr. Goodnutt jumped, and Mr. Ruckles smiled deep within his rat-soul. The silly little man was a mass of nerves! This was going to be almost too easy. It hardly gave Mr. Ruckles scope.

"At dead of night?" repeated Mr. Good-

nutt, failing to steady his voice.

"Yes; strange groans and blood-curdlin"

Mr. Goodnutt reeled. "You don't mean you can't mean . . ." he faltered.

"I do," said Mr. Ruckles gravely, even

sepulchrally.

"Ghosts?" breathed Mr. Goodnutt, his very voice a ghost itself. "Not—not ghosts?"

Suddenly Mr. Ruckles, clearly forgetting momentarily his courteous desire to spare Mrs. Goodnutt, raised his voice to something like a refined bellow.

"Ghosts!" he shouted. "Yes, ghosts!

This 'ouse is 'aunted!"

A cry of terror, poignant in its intensity, and infinitely appealing to all that is chivalrous in man, arose from the porch; it was succeeded immediately by the graceful slithering of Mrs. Goodnutt's well-curved form from the wicker chair and the flaccid thud of her abundant body as it obeyed the inexorable law of gravitation.

"Tut, tut!" exclaimed Mr. Ruckles. "Too bad, too bad! I never meant 'er to Why, she's actually gone off in a

dead faint!'

The smile within Mr. Ruckles's soul was the broadest of grins as he followed little Mr. Goodnutt as he sped up the path to the succour of his prostrate wife. This fat, florid woman was even more jumpy than the shrivelled wisp of a man. Ideal tenants! A nerve-ridden couple! What ho!

Ten minutes later Mrs. Goodnutt was out of her swoon and back again in her wicker chair. Against this chair Mr. Goodnutt was leaning limply, looking as though, with the slightest encouragement, he might follow his wife's fainting example. Mr. Ruckles was full and overflowing with apologies.

"I blame myself," said Mr. Ruckles humbly; "I shall never forgive myself for my clumsiness. Never. P'r'aps I'd better say no more. Let's drop the—the ghastly subjec'. Please—please forget I ever spoke."

Mrs. Goodnutt, whimpering, made a

pathetic attempt to be brave. "No, no," she insisted unsteadily; "I -I'd sooner know all. I couldn't bear to have anything kep' from me. No more could Bert. Could you, Bert?"

"No," said Mr. Goodnutt in a hollow

whisper.

Mr. Ruckles bowed—he rightly felt that a mere nod would not be in the picture.

"I ought to have told you before I let this cottage to you. That's where I made the first false step, and, 'aving made it, I 'esitated to own myself in the wrong. I acted according to my lights, but I acted wrong. I can see it now, and I own it frank and fair. Un'appily, I can't undo what's done, but I can do everything in my power to repair the error I was led into committing through me natural delicacy of feeling."

Mrs. Goodnutt, submerged in the depths of tearful prostration, wrung her hands. "But what is it?" she wailed. "Who—

what-haunts this house?"

Mr. Ruckles had imagination if not

knowledge.

"In ancient days of yore," he began sombrely, "a old Jacobean took refuge in this very cottage. He was suspected ofwell, never mind what he was suspected of, but, whatever it was, 'e'd done it, and, 'ard pressed, he took refuge from his enemies His enemies found him—he'd been betrayed by his chauffeur—and when they demanded that he should surrender, with coarse oaths which I won't repeat, he up and answered, 'Never!'-just like that, 'Never!'—and went so far as to call down a curse from 'eaven on 'em and on all who should live in this 'ouse ever after. Then he blew off his head with his blunderbuss, and died with a taunting laugh on his lips.'

Mr. Ruckles drew a deep breath. "And now," he added softly, "this 'eadless Jacobbean cannot rest. Anyhow, that's how the

story goes."

A prolonged shudder shook Mrs. Goodnutt. Mr. Goodnutt had developed a sort of hooting hiccough.

"There!" gasped Mrs. Goodnutt "I

knew it!"

"You knew it!" exploded Mr. Ruckles

joyfully.

"Ever since we come here," amplified the distressed lady, "Bert and me has felt there was a something about this cottage—a queerness, if you can understand me. And now we know. It's the 'eadless Jacob-bean."

"Sure enough," acquiesced Mr. Goodnutt

fatalistically.

Mr. Ruckles prepared to leave. His good work was virtually accomplished. He had only to do a bit of amateur haunting

that evening—a few groans, a tentative tapping at the cottage window, and so on

—to complete the deal.

"If," he said in an extremely manly way, "you consider that you have become tenants of this cottage under a misappre'ension, I need not, I'm sure, tell you that you are at liberty at any moment to leave without the formal notice. Indeed, I'll go further and say that, taking into consideration the awful breakdown in your 'ealths which might follow a protracted stay here, I shall be willing to refund you the rent for the unexpired period of your tenancy. Let me know what you decide. You'll find me a straightforward, honest landlord."

He went down the path jauntily—indeed, he had to put severe pressure upon himself to avoid dancing. Also he had a keen wish to whistle, also to laugh, also to sing loudly.

At the garden gate he turned to catch a most encouraging picture of Mr. and Mrs. Goodnutt clinging together in the wicker chair in a perfect paroxysm of supernatural dread.

III.

It was two weeks later.

Significant Mrs. Goodnutt closed her eyes and leant back in the wicker chair with the gentle, but quite musical, grunt of happy

emotional repletion.

"Once more, Bert," she urged dreamily; "read it all over again once more, before we cut it out and put it in our album. It's like a 'appy dream. It's better'n The Chubb-in-the-Wold Sentinel, ain't it? More clarssy and severe. Go on."

Insignificant Mr. Goodnutt, occupying as usual a small portion of the chair in the porch, smiled his self-effacing, deprecating smile, and, flattening out page five of that day's issue of *The Daily Sensation*, read as follows:—

THE HEADLESS JACOBITE.

Exclusive Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Goodnutt.

AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT.

"We're quiet folk. All we ask's to be left alone."

As during the past ten days so many wild rumours have been made public by contemporaries with wretched circulations regarding what has been loosely and incorrectly called The Goodnutt Ghost, *The Daily Sensation* has deemed it its duty, in the Public Interest, to publish the FACTS.

These have been obtained from the only authoritative source—the fountain-head: Mr. and Mrs. Goodnutt have granted an Exclusive Interview to our Representative. On the back page will be found pictures of Mr. (marked X) and Mrs. (marked O) Goodnutt; to the left of these is a very happy portrait of Our Special Commissioner (marked!) observing the ancient Jacobean cottage (marked?) where the strange psychic phenomena took place; while inset is a snapshot of one of Mr. Goodnutt's favourite Buff Orpington hens (marked 0). we print our Special Commissioner's report:

A dozen illiterate chattering rustics officiously guided me to what they called 'them Goodnutts' 'Aunted 'Ouse,' and watched me with awe when I boldly pushed open the garden gate and closed it behind me. Not for untold treasure would any one of these superstitious hamlet-dwellers have dared to set foot within that dread

" I found Mr. and Mrs. Goodnutt sharing a large wicker chair in the porch of the ancient and ill-reputed cottage. A homely, refined, middle-class, middle-aged couple; ingenuousness was their keynote; here were neither coronets nor Norman blood, but here emphatically, patent to the trained eye, shone forth kind hearts and simple faith. I touched my hat in a semi-military manner —a gesture of which I am quite unable to rid myself since serving in the Great Citizen Army (C2, Clerical Duties at the Base).

" 'I am The Daily Sensation,' I announced briskly. 'Now, then, what's all this about,

eh? What's the trouble here?'

"Mrs. Goodnutt lifted to me reverential eyes—handsome, large, limpid blue, but very reverential eyes. Mr. Goodnutt's gaze could be called almost fawning. Obviously this worthy couple was a little overwhelmed by The Daily Sensation being brought to their door in fleshly, rather than in paper, form. "'Oh,' whispered Mrs. Goodnutt, 'has it

got into the papers, then?'

"I explained gently-for the good lady was clearly agitated by the thought of publicity—that for some days past the wildest rumours had been current in the struggling portion of the Press, and that it was due to the Public that the Truth should be circulated. I invited her to give me—in her own untutored words—the facts concerning the Headless Jacobite.

"'Oh, I couldn't,' she gasped—'I couldn't, really! The whole thing has upset me to that extent that I'm all of a tremble at the mere thought of such goings-on. But Bert'll tell you, won't you, Bert?'

"'If you want me to, dear,' said Mr.

Goodnutt, with a heavy sigh.

"I poised my pencil; needless to say, I did not moisten the point.

"'Well,' began Mr. Goodnutt sadly, 'first of all I must tell you that we'd been warned about this haunting. Our landlord, a very upright man——'

"'A perfect gent in every sense of the

word,' corroborated Mrs. Goodnutt.

"'— went out of his way, in the kindest manner; to warn us that the house was haunted. He even offered to let us break our agreement because per'aps the strain on our nerves might injure our healths. But we didn't 'ardly believe him, did we, Babs?'

"' We were frightened,' said Mrs. Goodnutt, 'but we didn't really think such things could be allowed in the twentieth century, with modern improvements and

""But,' continued Mr. Goodnutt weightily, 'that very night IT began.'

"'Ah! And what form did IT take?' I

asked shrewdly.

"' It took the form,' said Mr. Goodnutt, his voice shaking, 'of strange cries and blood-curdling tappings at the window, just as our kind landlord had warned us might happen.'

Mrs. Goodnutt and the wicker chair trembled. 'I come all over funny-like when

I think of it,' she confessed.

"' When,' continued Mr. Goodnutt, 'after a bit, me and Mrs. Goodnutt ventured out into the garden, there wasn't a soul to be seen. So we guessed it must be the ghost. And next evening we knew we had guessed right, because two working men, on their way home, saw it floating over our garden and heard it groaning fit to wring your heart. And the next night, and the night after, and the night after that-because, of course, the news had spread—there must have been pretty near twenty people saw and heard it, including the curate, who saw, but did not wait to hear it.'

"' Dear me,' I remarked encouragingly. 'And what did this apparition look like?

"Mr. Goodnutt shuddered. accounts—and there were a great number of accounts—it must have been absolutely horrible. Sometimes it was a body without a head, and sometimes a head without a body, but always it was surrounded by a sort of a dim green light, like a bad fog, as it were, and always it was floating and

groaning. We couldn't get any sleep because of the people outside shricking and running about and telling other people to go back. Well, this went on for four nights, and

"Mr. Goodnutt paused dramatically, and

Mrs. Goodnutt caught her breath.

"' And then?' I suggested tactfully.

"'Then,' said Mr. Goodnutt, 'the very

rich gentleman from London came.'

"'Ah!'I breathed, my interest redoubled.

'His name?'

"Mr. Goodnutt shook his honest head. 'I couldn't tell you his name exactly,' he demurred, 'because he might not like it to be known. But it began with a G.'

" 'And ended with double B,' added Mrs. 'There were only Goodnutt ingenuously. four letters to his name, and the second one

was U.'

"' But he was very rich,' reiterated Mr. Goodnutt, 'and very angry. He came in a big, expensive motor. I can't think what had made him so angry. I suppose he didn't believe in ghosts, and didn't want anyone else to believe in them. He said that if we'd allow him to sleep the night here, he'd show the ghost what's what. Naturally we were delighted.'

"TDelighted,' echoed Mrs. Goodnutt, with

a dry sob.

"'Yes?' I prompted. 'Well, did he

sleep the night?'

"'No,' said Mr. Goodnutt regretfully, 'he didn't sleep at all. We went to bed at eleven-thirty, and at twelve-fifteen he was falling down the front stairs in his good silk pyjamas, making a noise something like a wounded buffalo, and something like a ship's siren, and something like a hungry pig, and something like a broody hen that's using a megaphone to be broody through. It was a queer, heartrending noise. It frightened Mrs. Goodnutt and me so much that we didn't dare move for a long time, and when at last we ventured out of our room, we found that Mr. Gubb—there, I've let out his name, after all—had gone for good, leaving his day clothes and his lovely fur coat behind him.'
"But,' I asked, 'what had he seen?
What had happened?'
"Mr. Goodnutt shook his head in the

manner of one who fears the worst. Goodnutt shivered sympathetically.

"' No one'll ever know,' said Mr. Goodnutt positively; 'but it must have been something very unusual to have drove him out like that, with hardly a stitch to his back and the weather so treacherous. He called next morning in his expensive car, and we took his clothes out to him-he wouldn't come an inch inside the garden, nor would he speak a word of his experience. He looked really ill—as though he'd had a shock, a bad one. All he'd say was that he'd been to see our landlord, Mr. Ruckles, and had spoken to him in a way that he'd remember if he lived to be a million.'

"'Ah!' I said spurringly. 'And since

then ?

"Mrs. Goodnutt got up, with an effort, and held out her well-shaped white hand

"' Nothing's 'appened since then,' she said softly. 'It'd almost seem as though the rich gentleman from London had laid the ghost for good and all. I 'ope so, I'm sure. We're quiet folk. All we ask's to be left alone. Good-bye.'

"And I, for one, hope with all my heart that the modest aspiration of this simple,

kindly couple may be realised."

Mr. Goodnutt, his reading finished, put down the copy of The Daily Sensation and drew from his breast-pocket a folded document endorsed AGREEMENT.

"Is it for five or seven years, Bert?"

asked his wife, smiling broadly.

"Seven, darling, and at a reduced rental. You see, it isn't everyone who'd be willing to live in a haunted house-Mr. Ruckles quite saw that."

Mrs. Goodnutt enveloped her husband in a

fond embrace.

"Kiss me, Bert," she crooned. He did so

-two or three times.

" And now," she said a little breathlessly -because Bert's kisses never lacked enthusiasm-" let's go in and have a look at our old travelling basket with all the dear old fakes in it. We owe it something, don't we, Bert?"

"A seven years' lease," agreed Mr.

Goodnutt.

Hand in hand, Professor Psycho, the Great Illusionist, and Babette, the Child Wonder, went indoors.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

THE INVENTORY. By J. Roland Fay.

"TRA-POT,' said Constance, who was supplying us with the articles to be packed.

"Tea-pot," I repeated, in my best business manner, and wrote "tea-pot" down. I picked up the tea-pot, wrapped it in tissue-paper, and wedged it firmly into a corner of the big box, which was already half full of other family valuables packed for the vaults of the bank, prior to our own departure for cliffs and a clearer atmosphere.

"Cake-stand," said Ruth, who was kneeling

"Two tea-pots and my christening mug, Daddy," said Peter. "Do let me pack my christening mug, Ruthie; please let me pack—"

"Hush, Peter!" said Ruth. "I want to

speak quietly to Daddy."

Ruth spoke in a low tone, and together we began to check the entire list from the begining. We hunted through the box to find out whether all the things on the list were really there; many things were taken out and mixed with things that had not been put in; many things were put in that had not been taken out.



HOLIDAY REVELATIONS.

"DID we really do that?"

beside the box, "and fish knives and forks in case."

"Tea-pot," said Constance, "two muffineers, and ——"

"Tea-pot," said Ruth.

"Tea-pot, Daddy," said Peter.

"Have you got tea-pot," said Ruth, "and cake-stand and fish knives and forks in case?"

"Four tea-pots, fish-stand, and two muffineers in case," I read.

Ruth sank back on her heels and sighed.

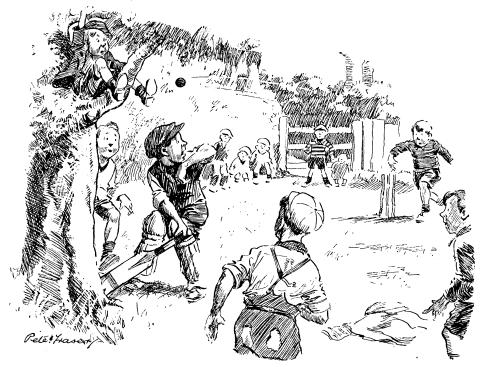
"We have two silver tea-pots," said Constance from the far end of the room. "Christening mug." "Salver," said the voice of Constance, "two entrée dishes, and a pair of candlesticks."

"Salver," repeated Ruth brazenly. And then, in an undertone to me: "Have you got the fork belonging to the salad bowl?"

"Two pairs of candlesticks, right," I said with emphasis—at the moment I was busily probing for the missing half of a pair of flower vases.

"What are you taking all the things out again for?" said Peter, with penetrating clearness. "Where's my christening mug?"

"I hope everything is very carefully packed and entered properly on the list; it's very



CRICKET SARCASM UP-TO-DATE.

Batsman (to local "express," who has just missed onlooker in tree): Nah, then, Smiffy, yer ain't bowlin' ter Tarzau!



"What I like abaht young Alf's stumpin' is that 'is mind works that quick 'e don't 'ave to think."

important," said Constance, approaching. "Here are two ash-trays, an ink-stand, and a cigarette box."

"Yes, yes," I said, rapidly endeavouring to give the muddle an orderly appearance,

"everything going splendidly."

"I can't find my christening mug," said Peter, giving the box an additional stir. "I'd like to polish my christening mug."



THE GOOD HOUSEWIFE.

FOND WIFE: Oh, Jack, come back! You mustn't wear that bathing suit—it hasn't been aired.

"I think I had better make the inventory," said Constance, eyeing the muddle, "while you and Ruth give your whole attention to the packing."

"No, no," I said quickly; "we're just getting into the way of it. Where were we, Ruth? Two christening mugs—I mean, two—two muffineers in——"

"One pair of candlesticks, I think," said

the calm, sweet voice of Ruth,
"Quite right," I said, and wrote "quite right" down.

"Well," said Constance, "I hope you won't make any mistakes; and be sure and take great care of the list when you have finished."

"We won't—I mean, we will—I mean, both. Is there anything else you would like us to put in?"

Constance moved away in search of more valuables. Peter discovered his christening mug deep in a corner of the box. pulled it out, crawled into a big armchair and sang his admiration of it in a loud voice. Then Ruth and I, left to ourselves, worked really hard at the inventory. Constance's ultimate in spection was always before us.

Constance is exacting—in fact, Peter had been put to bed and Ruth was beginning to show signs of sleepiness before we finished.

It was late. I alone of the household had not yet retired. I sat at the table, a blank sheet of paper before me, my fountain pen, between my fingers, pointing idly towards the ceiling. Suddenly the door opened. I hastily thrust the blank sheet of paper beneath the blotting-pad.

"What is it, Ruth?" I said, as Ruth appeared.

"Peter declar s he won't go to sleep without his christening mug," she said; "but I thought, perhaps, a biscuit—"

"Peter must wait for his biscuit," I said; I had a matter of far greater importance in hand. "Let me make you comfortable on the sofa for a few minutes, Ruth, and you need do no lessons tomorrow morning."

I wrapped her in the hearthrug and, with the help of all the cushions, I made her quite cosy on the sofa.

"Now," I said, returning to the table, "there were two tea-pots, I think, and two muffineers in case—how does it go on?"

"But where is the inventory?" asked Ruth.
"Hush!" I said. "I have been destroying some odd papers, Ruth; it—it may have been among them. But you have a good memory. What comes after two muffineers in case?"

LIALL J. Will <u>Oetober</u> ONE-SHILLING-NET
CO-LIMITED & LONDON-&-MELBOURNE



Cook milk-rich with cream

MANY a woman spends all her life cooking and never achieves what every woman wants-a reputation among her friends as a cook.

Perhaps she does not know the real secret of good cooking, which sounds almost too extravagant to mention nowadays-it is plenty of butter and cream and eggs. The problem is to get them cheap enough for cooking purposes.

Libby's Evaporated Milk solves part of that problem. On this page is shown a dinner of five dishesall made with Libby's Milk and all noticeably richer as a result of its use.

Potato Surprise.

1 large potato. 1 teaspoon chonnel ham. 2 tablespoons Libby's Milk. † teaspoon salt. Pepper.

Grease surface of a large potato and bake. Cut off top of potato; remove inner part and mash, being careful not to break the shell. Season with salt, pepper, chopped ham, and Libby's Milk worth diluted. Refill shell: make a light indentation in the centre, in which place an uncooked egg. Pour one tablespoon of Libby's Milk over the egg, sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake six minutes in a moderate oven.

Gold and White Cake.

\$\frac{1}{4}\text{ if, four.}\$

2 tablesnoons Libb's 1\frac{1}{2} teaspoons baking powder 1. Tr or mavgarine. 2 epu whites. 4 to supur, 1. 1 teaspoon vanilla. 4 teaspoon vanilla. 4 teaspoon vanilla. 5 teaspoon salt.

Studespoons water. warm. Cream butter and sagar. Mix flour, baking powder and salt; mix milk and water. Add dry ingredients and liquid alternately to butter and sugar. Flavour. Partially beat ecg whites, add cream of tartar, beat until stiff: fold into cake mixture. This will make one layer which is to be used between two layers of the following Gold Cake.

following Gold Cake.

† 1b. Inter or 2 cups four. I teaspoon ranilla.

margarine. 4 eap yolds. 3 teaspoons baking nowder.

† 1b sugar. 5 tablespoons Labby's Mik. 5 tablespoons water.

Cream butter and sugar, add well-beaten egg volks. Mix and
sift dry incredients and add alternately with liquid to the first
nixture. Flavour. Bake in a mode ate oven. This will make
two layers. Put one white layer between the gold layers. Use
wo egg whites which are left for the frosting.

A meat pie made of tender veal, with a little celery, peas and pepper, and with a rich cream sauce. The baked potato is beaten fluffy with the milk—and milk added to the egg bakes it like custard. The cake looks like a mountain of goodness—and it is.

There is a reason for this added richness. Libby's Evaporated Milk is pure, rich milk from the finest dairy regions, evaporated to twice its original richness. That is why Libby's Milk has twice the amount of butter fat that is contained in ordinary milk.

Pate Pie.

† pt. Libby's Milk.
† to, of dates.
† pt. water.
† 2 tablespoons sugar.
† teuspoon satt.
* teuspoon satt.
† teuspoon satt.
† teuspoon satt.
* teuspo

sugar and brown in a hot oven.

Cucumber and Tomato Salad.

3 tomatoes.

Lemon juice.

Lemon juice.

1 brunch realishes.

Cucumber.

1 head lettuce.

1 head lettuce.

1 head lettuce.

1 head settuce.

1 head lettuce.

2 head lettuce.

3 head lettuce.

3 head lettuce.

4 head lettuce.

5 head lettuce.

5 head lettuce.

1 head le

Meat Pie.

Meat Pie.

1 th weal

1 stalk celery.

1 stalk celery.

1 stalk celery.

1 stalk celery.

2 pt. Libby's Evaporated Milk.

Cut yeal for stewing, put in saucepan with just enough water to stemmer. Add saltand moin cut up. Let simmer. Half-hour before it is done add peas, celery, and pepper. When stew is done there should be about two cups of stock. Take out a cup and let cool slightly before adding to the Libby's Milk. Take a little of the cold milk to sit with flour, making a smooth paste. Add milk and water to stew, stir in the flour paste. Let this cook until it thickens, stirring all the liquor in to make a smooth gravy. Turn all into a baking dish, cover with a pie crust and bake in a hot oven 10 or 12 minutes.

Let your Grocer be your Milkman.

Write for our free booklet " Finer Flavoured Milk Dishes." It is full of recip's for delicious cream and butter-saving dishes that will please the whole family.

M^cNeill & Libby, Libby, Ltd.

(Dept. 43), 8, GREAT TOWER STREET, LONDON, E.C.3.

MANCHESTER ABERDEEN BRISTOL HULL LIVERPOOL NEWCASTLE GLASGOW BIRMINGHAM BELFAST







Reproduced by permission of the Autotype Fine Art Company, New Oxford Street, W., owners of the copyright and publishers of the large plate A WINDY DAY, OCTOBER. BY E. E. BRISCOE.



"'You can go. I'll write to you when I want you. Don't bother to leave your address."

THE RULE OF THE ROAD

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "The Brother of Daphne," "The Courts of Idleness," "Berry and Co.," "Anthony Lyveden."

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

The first story of a new series by Dornford Yates, in which the scenes are laid upon the Continent, the principal characters being the now familiar figures of Berry and Daphne Pleydell, their cousins Jonah and Jill Mansel, the charming American girl, Adèle, and her husband, the brother of Daphne, the narrator of their previous adventures.

" C HALL I massage it?" said Berry. The suggestion was loudly condemned.

"Right," replied my brother-in-law. "That reduces us to faith-healing. On the command 'One,' make your mind a blankthat shouldn't be difficult—realise that the agony you aren't suffering is imaginary, and close both legs. One! On the command Two '-

You can go," I said wearily. "You

can go. I'll write to you when I want you.

Don't bother to leave your address."

"But how vulgar," said Berry. "How very vulgar." He paused to glance at his watch. "Dear me! Half-past ten, and I haven't had my beer yet." He stepped to the door. "Should the pain become excruciating, turn upon the stomach and repeat Kipling's 'If.' Should——"

My sister and Jill fairly hundled him out

My sister and Jill fairly bundled him out

Y 2

of the doorway.

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Sitting by my side upon the bed, Adèle laid her cheek against mine.

" Is it any better, old chap?"

"The pain's practically stopped," said I, "thank Heaven. Putting it up's done that. But I'm in for a stiff leg, dear. I know that. Not that that matters really, but it means I can't drive."

It was unfortunate that, before I had been upon French soil for half an hour, I should be kicked by a testy cab-horse of whose existence—much less proximity—thanks to the poor lighting of Boulogne, I had been totally unaware. I had been kicked upon the same knee in 1916. On that occasion I had gone with a stiff leg for a fortnight. It seemed unpleasantly probable that history would wholly repeat itself.

"I can travel," I continued. "I shall be able to walk with a stick, but I shan't be able to drive. And, as Jonah can't drive more than one car at a time, Berry'll have

to take the other."

At my words Daphne started, and Jill

gave a little cry.

"B-but, Boy, he's only had three lessons."

"I know, but he'll get through somehow. I'll sit by his side. It'll shorten my life, of course, but what else can we do? Even if Fitch was here, there's no room for a chauffeur. And you'd find towing tedious after the first five hundred miles."

With a white forefinger to her lips, my

sister regarded me.

"I know he's a disgrace," she said slowly, but he's—he's the only husband I've got, Boy, and—he has his points," she concluded softly with the tenderest smile.

I stretched out a hand and drew her

towards me.

"Isn't he my only brother, darling? Isn't he—Berry? I'll see he comes to no harm."

"You really think it's safe?"

"Perfectly." For one thing, I shall be able to reach the hand-brake rather more easily than he will. . . ."

My sister kissed me.

"I like the sound of that," she said cheerfully.

It was the fifth day of November, and all

six of us were for the Pyrenees.

A month ago Adèle and I, new-wed, had visited Pau. We had found the place good, conceived the idea of spending the winter there, and wired for instructions. Within three days we had received four letters.

The first was from Jill.

A DÈLE DARLING,

How sweet of you both to think of it! We're all simply thrilled. Try and get one with a palm-tree and some wisteria. We miss you awfully. Tell Boy Nobby is splendid and sends his love. Oh, and he smells his coat every day. Isn't it pathetic? My hair won't go like yours, but I'm going to try again. All our love to you and your HUSBAND,

JILL.

Then came Jonah's.

DEAR BOY

What about tobacco? You might examine the chances of smuggling. I'm sending you a hundred cigarettes conspicuously labelled BENGER'S FOOD, to see what happens. I suppose the roads are pretty bad. What about fishing? Yours, JONAH.

(I subsequently received a curt communication to the effect that there was a package, addressed to me and purporting to contain "Farine," lying at the local custom-house. Adèle was horrified. I endeavoured to reassure her, tore up the notice, and cursed my cousin savagely. When three days had passed, and I was still at liberty, Adèle plucked up heart, but, for the rest of our visit, upon sight of a gendarme she was apt to become distrait and lose the thread of her discourse.)

A letter from Daphne had arrived the

next day.

Dearest Adèle,

We're all delighted with the idea.

I don't think six months would be too long. I agree that a villa would be much the best, and we're perfectly content to leave the selection to you. You know what room we must have. I suppose two bathrooms would be too much to expect. About servants: we can bring some, but I think we ought to have a French cook to do the marketing, and perhaps one other to keep her company and help in the kitchen and house. Will you see what you can do? Plate and linen, of course, we can bring. By the way, Madge Willoughby tells me that last year in France they had some difficulty about coal; so tell Boy to see if he can order some now. All this, of course, if you can get a villa.

Your loving sister,

 \hat{D}_{APHNE} .

Berry's came last. DEAR BROTHER,

So we shall ourselves winter this year at Pau? Eh bien! There are, perhaps, worse places. At least, the sun will shine. Ma foi, to think that upon you depend all the arrangements. Tant pis! My suite must face itself

south and adjoin the bathroom. Otherwise I cannot answer for my health, or, for the matter

of that, yours either.

Kindly omit from your next letter any reference to the mountains. "Impressions of the Pyrenees" by a fool who has been married for less than three weeks not only are valueless, but make my gorge rise—une élévation très dangereuse.

Which brings me to your wife. How is the shrew? Tell her I have some socks for her to

darn on her return.

It was thoughtful of you to emphasise the fact that the season of green figs, to a surfeit of which I sincerely hope you will succumb, will be over before I reach Pau. I am inclined to think that the five hundred cigars George sent you will be over even earlier. Besides, I shall at once console and distend myself with foie gras.

We must have a French cook, of course a very priestess of Gluttony—skilful to lure the timid appetite from the fastness of satiety.

Enfin. . .

I ask myself why I shall have made the trouble to write to you. You have, of course, an opportunity unique of making a mess with a copper bottom of my life for six months. Mais, mon Dieu, que vous serez puni!

Je t'embrasse, vieil haricot, sur les deux joues.

BERRY.

P.S.—This here letter is a talisman, and should be worn upon the exterior of the abdominal wall during a drought.

Considering the nature of our holiday, Adèle and I did not so badly. Before we left Pau I had signed the lease of an attractive villa, standing well in its own grounds and commanding a prospect of the mountains as fine as could be. Adèle had engaged a Frenchwoman and her daughter, both of whom were well spoken of, and had been in the service of English and American families before the War. A supply of fuel had been reserved, and various minor arrangements had been concluded. Ere we were back at White Ladies, October was old.

It had been Jonah's belated suggestion that our migration should be accomplished by car. It was Jonah's enterprise that reduced the upheaval of our plans, consequent upon the instant adoption of his idea, to order and convenience. By the third of November everything had been arranged. The heavier stuff had been embarked for Bordeaux; the servants were ready to accompany the rest of the luggage by way

of Paris; the Rolls had been sold. In the latter's place we had purchased two smaller cars—both new, both of the same make, both coupés, both painted blue. Indeed, but for their numbers, which were consecutive, we could not have told them apart. Each seated three inside, comfortably, while a respectable quantity of baggage could be easily bestowed in each of the capacious boots.

Certainly my cousin's staff work had been

superb.

In the circumstances it seemed hardly fair that upon this, the first night of our venture, he should be faced with the labour of shepherding both cars, single-handed, first clear of the Customs, and then, one by one, through the cold, dark streets which led from the quay to the garage of the hotel.

As if she had read my thought—

"Poor Jonah!" said Adèle suddenly.

A knock upon the door interrupted her. This being opened admitted Nobby, two porters, our luggage, two waiters, a large dish of sandwiches, some beer, coffee and its accessories, Jonah, and finally Berry.

"You must be tired," said the latter. "Let's sit down, shall I?" He sank into a chair. "And how's the comic patella? I well remember, when I was in Plumbago, a somewhat similar accident. A large cherry-coloured gibus, on its wrong side—""

"At the present moment," said I, wrestling with the Sealyham's advances, "we're more concerned with your future than with your past. It's the Bank of England to a ha'p'orth of figs that to-morrow morning I shall have a stiff leg. Very good." I paused. "Those three lessons you've had," I added carelessly, "will come in useful."

Jonah, who was filling a tumbler, started violently and spilled some beer. Then he leaned against the wall and began to laugh

helplessly.

Coldly Berry regarded him.

"I fail," he said stiffly, "to see the point of your mirth. I gather that it is proposed to enjoy my services for the propulsion of one of the automobiles—that, while you will be responsible for the 'shoving' of Ping, these delicate hands will flick Pong across France. Very good. Let the Press be informed; call forth the ballad-mongers. What would have been a somewhat sordid drive will become a winged flight, sublime and deathless."

"I trust so," said Jonah. "Six hundred miles with a fool at the wheel is a tall order.

but, if your companions survive the first two days, they ought to pull through. Try not to do more than five pounds' worth of damage to the gallon, won't you?"

"Sour grapes," said Berry. "The professional reviles the distinguished

amateur."

"Seriously," said I, "it's no laughing

matter."

"I agree," said Daphne. "You'll have to just crawl along all the way. After all, we've got six months to get there in. Promise me you won't try and pass anything."

"I promise," replied her husband. "Should another vehicle approach, I'll stop the engine and go and hide in a wood

till it's gone."

"Fool," said his wife. "I meant 'overtake anything,' of course. You know I did. Promise you won't try and rush past things just to get in front of them."

I took up the cudgels.

"We've got to get along, darling, and he can't give a promise like that. You wouldn't want to do fifty miles behind a tractionengine, would you? Remember, I shall be by his side. He may be holding the wheel, but I shall be driving the car. Make him promise to obey me implicitly, if you like."

"That's right," said Jill. "You will,

won't you, Berry?"

The latter looked at Adèle.

"Do you also subscribe to my humiliation?" he said.

Adèle smiled and nodded.

"Unquestionably," she said. "By the time you get to Pau, you'll be an expert.

And then you can teach me."

"The pill-gilder," said my brother-in-law. "Well, well. So far as in me lies, I'll do as I'm told. But I insist upon plain English. I'm not going to be suddenly yelled at to 'double-clutch,' or 'feel the brake,' or 'close the throttle,' or something. It makes me want to burst into tears. That fellow who was teaching me asked me, without any warning and in the middle of some sheep, what I should do if one of my 'big ends were to run out.' I said I should consult a specialist, but the question upset me. Indirectly, it also upset the shepherd. . . . Which reminds me, I never knew a human being could jump so far. The moment he felt the radiator. . ."

"You never told us this," said Daphne reproachfully. "If I'd known you'd knocked somebody down—."

"I never knocked him down," said Berry. "I tell you he jumped. . . . We stopped, of course, and explained. He was a little nettled at first, but we parted on the best of terms."

"It's all very well," said my sister, "but

I'd no idea---''

"Every dog must have his bite," said I, laughing. "He won't do it again. And now, since I'm tethered, will somebody give me some beer?"

Then and there supper was consumed.

A vigorous discussion of the turn events had taken, and the advancement and scrutiny of a variety of high speculations regarding the probable style of our progress to Pau, prevailed until past twelve o'clock, but at length the others were evicted, and Adèle, Nobby, and I were able to prepare for the night.

Out of the luxurious silence of a hot bath Adèle's voice came floating into the bed-

room

"Boy!"

"Yes, lady?"

"I wish I was going with you to-morrow instead of Daphne."

"So do I," I said heartily.

Adèle sighed. Then-

"It can't be helped," she said. "I think, on the whole, she would have worried more than I shall."

"Not a doubt of it," said I cheerfully.

"As she said, Berry's the only husband

she's got."

Adèle choked. Presently——

"The real reason," she said, "is because she mistrusts her husband even more than I trust mine."

When I had worked this out—

"Aha," I said pleasedly.

"But then, of course," said Adèle, "she's been married much longer."

* * * * *

With Rouen as our objective, we left Boulogne the next morning at ten o'clock. To speak more accurately, we left the hotel at ten o'clock and Boulogne itself some forty minutes later. The negotiation of an up-gradient leading out of the town was responsible for the delay.

My sister and I shall remember that hill so long as we live. So, I imagine, will Berry. We were half-way up when he stopped the engine for the first time. We were still half-way up when he stopped it for the eighth time. Indeed, it was at this juncture that I suggested that he should rest from his labours and smoke a cigarette.

My brother-in-law shook his head.

"Shall I slide down backwards and begin again?" he inquired.

"No, thanks," said I. "I have a foolish

preference for facing death."

"D'you think we could push it up?"

said Daphne.
"Frankly," said I, "I don't. You see, she weighs over a ton without the luggage.'

"Well, don't say it," said Berry, "because, if you do, I shall scream. No man born of woman could let in that clutch more slowly, and yet you say it's too fast. The truth is, there's something wrong with the car."

"There soon will be," I retorted. "The starter will fail. Then every time you stop



"My sister and I clung to one another in an agony of stifled mirth."

Berry cleared his throat.
"I am not," he said, "going through the farce of asking what I do wrong, because I know the answer. It's not the right one, but you seem incapable of giving any other."

"I am," said I.

the engine you'll have to get out and crank. That'll make you think."

"'Make me think'?" yelled Berry.
"D'you think I haven't been thinking? D'you think I'm not thinking now ? Haven't I almost burst my brains with thinking?" Daphne began to laugh helplessly. "That's right," added her husband savagely. "See the humorous side. I may go mad any minute, but don't let that stop you." And, with that, he set his foot upon the self-

When he had stopped the engine another three times, he applied the hand-brake with unnecessary violence, sank back in his seat,

and folded his hands.

My sister and I clung to one another in an agony of stifled mirth.

Berry closed his eyes.

"My work," he said quietly, "is over. I now see that it is ordained that we shall not leave this spot. There's probably an angel in the way with a drawn sword, and the car sees it, although we can't. Any way, I'm not going to fight against Fate. And now don't speak to me. I'm going to dwell on bullock-carts and goat-chaises and other horse-drawn vehicles. I shan't last many minutes, and I should like to die in peace."

With a swift rush, Ping drew up along-From its interior Adèle, Jill, Nobby

and Jonah peered at us excitedly.

"Hullo!" said the latter. "What's up?" Go away," said Berry. "Drive on to your doom. An apparition has appeared to us, warning us not to proceed. It was quite definite about it. Good-bye."

"Jonah, old chap," said I, "I'm afraid you're for it. Unless you take us up, we

shall be here till nightfall."

With a groan my cousin opened his door

and descended into the road. . . .

One minute later we were at the top of

"And now," said Daphne, with the Michelin Guide open upon her knees, " now for Montreuil."

When five minutes had passed and my brother-in-law was breathing through his nose less audibly, I lighted a cigarette and

ventured to look about me.

. It was certainly a fine highway that we were using. Broad, direct, smooth beyond all expectation, it lay like a clean-cut sash upon the countryside, rippling away into the distance as though it were indeed that long, long lane that hath no turning. Presently a curve would come to save the face of the proverb, but the bends were few in number, and, as a general rule, did little more than switch the road a point or two to east or west, as the mood took them. There was little traffic, and the surface was dry.

Something had been said about the two cars keeping together, but I was not surprised when Jonah passed us like a whirlwind before we were half-way to Samer. He explained afterwards that he had stuck it as long as he could, but that to hold a car down to twenty on a road like a private racing-track was worse than "pulling."

Fired by Jonah's example, Berry laid hold of the wheel, and we took the next hill

at twenty-five.

It was a brilliant day, but the cold was intense, and I think we were all glad that. Pong was a closeable car. That Winter's reign had begun was most apparent. There was a bleak look upon the country's face: birch-rods that had been poplars made us gaunt avenues: here and there the cold jewellery of frost was sparkling. I fell to wondering how far south we must go to find it warmer.

Presently we came to Montreuil. As we entered the little town—

"This," said I, "was the headquarters of the British Expeditionary Force. From behind these walls --- "

"Don't talk," said Daphne, "or I shall make a mistake. Round to the left here. Wait a minute. No, that's right. straight on. What a blessing this Michelin Guide is! Not too fast, Berry. Straight on. This ought to be Grande Rue." She peered out of the window. "Yes, that's right. Now, in a minute you turn to the left. \dots ?

After all, I reflected, we had to get to

Rouen, and it was past mid-day.

We had sworn not to lunch before we had passed Abbeville, so, since we had breakfasted betimes, I furtively encouraged my brother-in-law to "put her along."

His response was to overtake and pass a lorry upon the wrong side, drive an unsuspecting bicyclist into a ditch and swerve, like a drunken sea-gull, to avoid a dead fowl. As we were going over forty, it was all over before we knew where we were, but the impression of impending death was vivid and lasting, and nearly a minute had elapsed before I could trust my voice.

"Are we still alive?" breathed Daphne.

"I'm afraid to open my eyes."
"I think we must be," said I. "At least, I'm still thirsty, if that's anything to go by.'

"I consider," said Berry, "that the way in which I extricated us from that *impasse* was little short of masterly. That cyclist ought to remember me in his prayers."

I don't want to discourage you," I said

grimly, "but I shouldn't bank on it."

The plan of Abbeville, printed in the Guide, was as simple to read as were my sister's directions to follow. At a critical moment, however, Berry felt unable to

turn to the right.

"The trouble is," he explained, as we plunged into a maze of back streets, "I've only got two hands and feet. To have got round that corner, I should have had to take out the clutch, go into third, release the brake, put out a hand, accelerate, sound the clarion and put the wheel over simultaneously. Now, with seven limbs I could have done it. With eight, I could also have. scratched myself--an operation, I may say, which can be no longer postponed." He drew up before a charcuterie and mopped his face. "What a beautiful bunch of sausages!" he added. "Shall we get some? Or d'you think they'd be dead before we get to Rouen?"

In contemptuous silence Daphne lowered her window, accosted the first passer-by, and asked the way. An admission that it was possible to reach the Neufchâtel road without actually retracing our steps was at length extracted, and, after a prolonged study of the plan, my sister gave the word to proceed. Save that we twice mounted the pavement, grazed a waggon, and literally brushed an urchin out of the way, our emergence from Abbeville was accomplished

without further incident.

With the knowledge that, barring accidents, we ought to reach Rouen by halfpast five, we ventured to devour a wayside lunch some ten minutes later.

It was after Neufchâtel that the surface of the great grey road argued neglect in no uncertain terms. For mile after mile, fat bulls of Basan, in the shape of gigantic pot-holes, gaped threateningly upon us. Berry, who was driving much better, did all that he could, but only a trick-cyclist could have picked his way between them. The car hiccoughed along piteously. . . .

With the approach of darkness, driving became a burden, being driven a weariness of the flesh, and we were all thankful when we slid down a paved hill into the Cathedral City and, presently, past the great church and on to the very bank of the River Seine.

The others had been awaiting us for

nearly two hours.

"With this sun," said Adèle, "they ought to be glorious."

Impiously I reflected that Berry was almost certainly enjoying his breakfast in

"I expect they will," I said abstractedly.

Adèle slid an arm through mine.

"It's very sweet of you to come with me, Boy."

I stood still and looked at her.

"You're a wonderful child," I said. "When you speak like that, I want to kick myself and burst into song simultaneously. I suppose that's Love."

"Texpect so," said Adèle mischievously. Five minutes later we were standing beneath the shadow of Chartres Cathedral.

We had come, my wife and I, to see the windows. The day before had been dull, and what light there was had been failing when we had visited the shrine. To-day, however, was all glorious.

If we had risen early, we had our

The place had become a gallery with jewels for pictures. Out of the sombre depths the aged webs of magic glowed with the matchless flush of precious stones. From every side colours we had not dreamed of enriched our eyes. To make the great west rose, the world herself might have been spoiled of her gems. Looking upon this mystery, no man can wonder that the art is lost. Clearly it went the way of Babel. For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. Windows the sun was lighting were at once more real and more magnificent. Crimsons and blues, purples and greens, yellows and violets, blazed with that ancient majesty which only lives to-day in the peal of a great organ, the call of a silver trumpet, or the proud roll of drums. Out of the gorgeous pageant mote-ridden rays issued like messengers, to badge the cold grey stone with tender images and set a smile upon the face of stateliness. "Such old, old panes, says someone. "Six hundred years and more. How wonderful!" Pardon me, but I have seen them, and it is not wonderful at all. Beneath their spell, centuries shrink to afternoons. The windows of Chartres are above Time. They are the peepholes of Immortality.

We returned to the hotel in time to contribute to a heated argument upon the

subject of tipping

"It's perfectly simple," said Berry. "You think of what you would hate to have given before the War, double it, add forty per cent. for the increased cost of living, halve it because of the Exchange, ask them whether they'd like it in notes or gold, and pay them in postage-stamps."

"I want to know," said Daphne, "what

to give the chambermaid."

"Eight francs fifty. That's the equivalent of half-a-crown before the War."
"Nonsense," said his wife. "Five francs

is heaps, and you know it."

"I think it's too much," said Berry. "Give her one instead, and tell her you've hidden the rest in the bathroom and that, when she touches the towel-rail, warm."

"As a matter of fact," said Jill uneasily,

"it's all over. I've done it."

" I gave her fifty," she said.

There was a shriek of laughter. "Did she faint?" said Berry. " Or try to eat grass, or anything?"

Gravely Jill shook her head.

"She talked a great deal-very fast. I couldn't follow her. And then she turned away and began to cry. I was so glad I'd

"So are we all," said Daphne. She was supported heartily.



"When, upon the sickly resumption of negotiations, it appeared highly probable that they would not be permitted to proceed, Jill had wept openly. . . .

There was a dreadful silence. Then—

"Tell us the worst," said I, "and get it over."

"I'm—I'm afraid I gave her rather a lot, but she had a nice face."

"She had a nice step," said Berry. noticed that about five this morning."

"How much?" said I relentlessly. Jill looked round guiltily.

Jonah looked at his watch.

"I suggest," he said, "that we start at eleven, then we shall fetch up in time to see the cathedral."

"How far is Tours?" said Daphne.

"Eighty-six miles."
"Let's keep together to-day," said Jill.
"It's much more fun."

Her brother shook his head.

Jonah stifled a yawn.

you, we must be in front."

"You can't have it both ways," he said.

"If we're to warn people not to shoot at

"I don't want," he said, " to be arrested for loitering."

"Don't you worry," said Berry. wouldn't be seen with you."

Jonah sighed.



France is nothing if not emotional. Visibly affected by her distress, the police had immediately become less hostile.'

"Where there's a will there's a way," he murmured.

"More," said Berry. "We regard you rather less than the dust beneath our detachable wheels. You pollute the road with your hoghood. I suppose it's no use asking you to keep behind us."

"None whatever," replied our cousin.
"Why should we?"

"Well," said Berry, "supposing a tire discovers that I'm driving and bursts with pride, who's going to change the wheel?"

was travelling with Berry and me instead of with Jonah.

For this new order of battle Nobby was solely responsible. Upon the first day's journey the terrier had whined all the way to Rouen because he had wanted to be with me. As one of his audience, Jonah had been offensively outspoken regarding this predilection. Upon the following day the dog's desire had been gratified, whereupon he had whined all the way to Chartres because he was apart from Adèle. Commenting upon this unsuspected devotion, Berry had been quite as outspoken as Jonah, and much more offensive. Naturally, to withstand such importunity was out of the question, and, since it was impossible for me to leave Berry, the line of least resistance was followed, and Daphne and Adèle changed places.

Our way out of Chartres was short and simple, and, with the exception of temporarily obstructing two trams by the artless expedient of remaining motionless upon the permanent way, Pong emerged from the city without a stain upon his character.

The Vendôme road looked promising and proved excellent. Very soon we were flying. For all that, Jonah overtook us as we were

nearing Bonneval

It was some thirty minutes later, as we were leaving Châteaudun, that a sour-faced gendarme with a blue nose motioned to us to stop. Standing upon the near pavement, the fellow was at once conversing with a postman and looking malevolently in our direction. I think we all scented mischief.

"What can he want?" growled Berry,

as he brought the car to a standstill.

"He's probably being officious," said I, getting our papers ready. "We're strangers, and he's in a bad humour. Consequently, he's going to scrutinise our triptyque, passports, passes and certificates, to see if he can accuse us of anything. Happily they're all in order, so he'll be disappointed. When he's thoroughly satisfied that he can bring no charge against us, he'll order us to proceed."

"He's taking his time about it," observed

my brother-in-law.

I looked up from the documents.

My gentleman was still talking to the postman, while his pig's eyes were still surveying the car. From his companion's demeanour, he seemed to be whetting his wit at our expense.

"This is intolerable," said I. "Ask him

what he wants, ladv."

Adèle leaned forward and put her head out of the window.

"Vous désirez quelque chose, monsieur?" The quedarme waved his hand.

"Attendez," he said insolently.

The postman sniggered shamefacedly.

Adèle sank back in her seat, her cheeks flaming.

In a voice trembling with passion I con-

jured Berry to proceed.

The moment the car moved, the official sprang forward, gesticulating furiously.

As we passed him, I put out my head.

"C'est à nous, maintenant, d'égayer le facteur!" I cried.

From the hoarse yells which followed us, it was clear that we had left the fellow beside himself with rage. Looking back through the little window, I could see him dancing. Suddenly he stopped, peered after us, and then swung about and ran ridiculously up the street.

"Blast him, he's going to telephone!"

said I. "Where's the map?"

Together Adèle and I pored over the

"If," said Berry, "you're going to direct me to turn off, for Heaven's sake be quick about it. At the present moment I'm just blinding along into the blue and, for all I know, an oversized hornets' nest. Of course they mayn't sting when there's an 'r' in the month, but then they mightn't know that. Or am I thinking of oysters?"

"They'll stop us at Vendôme," said I. "Not before. Right oh! We must turn to the right at Cloyes and make for St. Calais. We can get round to Tours that way. It'll take us about twenty miles out of our way,

but---

"Yes, and when we don't show up at Vendôme, they'll wire to Calais. Seriously, as Shakespeare says,' I'm all of a doo-dah."

That we should be stopped at St. Calais was not likely, and I said as much. What did worry me, because it was far more probable. was that when they drew blank at Vendôme, the authorities would telephone to Tours. Any apprehension, however, regarding our reception at that city was soon mercifully, unmercifully, and somewhat paradoxically overshadowed by a more instant anxiety lest we should never arrive there at all. From the moment we left the main road, the obstacles in the shape of uncharted roads and villages, pavements, cattle, goats, a horse fair, and finally a series of appalling gradients, opposed our passage. All things considered, my brother-in-law drove admirably. But it was a bad business, and, while my wife and Berry were very staunch, I think we all regretted that I had been so high with Blue Nose.

Night had fallen ere we slunk into Tours. Fully expecting to find that the others had well-nigh given us up, we were astounded to learn at the hotel that Ping had not yet arrived. Indeed, we had finished dinner, and were debating seriously whether we should take a hired car and go to seek them, when there was a flurry of steps in the corridor, Nobby rushed to the door, and

the next moment Daphne and Jill burst into the room.

"My darling," said Berry, advancing, "where on earth have you been?"

My sister put her arms about his neck and looked into his eyes.

"Kiss me 'Good-bye,' "she said. "Jonah's just coming."

Her husband stared at her. Then—

"Is it as bad as all that?" he said. "Dear, dear. And how did he get the booze?"

Somebody cleared his throat.

I swung round, to see Jonah regarding us. "You three beauties," he said. "Four with Nobby."

"But what do you mean?" said Adèle.

"What have we done?"

"Done?" cried Jonah. "Done? Where

d'you think we've been ? "

"It can't have been goats that stopped you," said Berry, "because I had all the goats. There was a great rally of goats at Št. Calais this afternoon. It was a wonderful smell—I mean sight."
"Guess again," said Jonah grimly.

"You haven't been waiting for us on the road?" said I.

"You're getting warmer," was the reply.

Adèle gave a sudden cry. 🗀

"O-o-oh, Jonah," she gasped, "you've been at Vendôme!"

I started violently, and Berry, who was

about to speak, choked.

"That's right," said Jonah shortly. "Nice little place—what I saw of it. Lovely view from the police-station." He leaned against the mantelpiece and lighted a cigarette. "It may amuse you to know," he added, "that the expiation of your crime" took us six and a half hours and cost five hundred francs."

In response to our thirsty enquiries, the

tale came bubbling.

My surmise that the blue-nosed gendarme would telephone to Vendôme had been well-founded. He had forwarded an exact description of Pong, together with the letters and the first three figures of the four appearing upon the number-plate. minutes later Ping had sailed innocently into Vendôme—and up to her doom. . .

The Vendôme police could hardly believe their eyes. Here was the offending car, corresponding in every particular to the one described to them, admittedly fresh from Châteaudun, yet having covered the thirty-nine kilometres in eleven minutes. It was amazing . . . almost incredible . . .

almost. . . . Of outlaws, however, all things were credible—even a speed of one hundred and thirty-six miles an hour. For it was without doubt that outlaw which had flouted Authority at Châteaudun. indubitably. And, having thus flouted Authority, what was more natural than that it should endeavour to outstrip the consequences of its deed? But, mon Dieu, what wickedness! . . .

In vain had Jonah protested and Daphne declared their innocence. The telephone was again requisitioned, and the blue-nosed gendarme summoned and cross-examined. As luck would have it, he could not speak to the passengers, beyond affirming that they included one man and one woman. . . . When he gratuitously added that the reason why he could not swear to the whole of the number was because of the terrible pace at which the car was moving, the game was

Finding that the accusation of travelling at a horrifying speed was assuming a serious look, my sister and cousins at length decided that they had no alternative but to give us away. They had, of course, realised that Pong was implicated from the beginning. Consequently, with the flourish of one who has hit upon the solution of a problem, they divulged our existence. They were politely, but wholly disbelieved. In reply, they had politely, but confidently, invited the police

to wait and see. . . .

For over four hours they had anxiously awaited the arrival of Pong. When at last the humiliating truth began to dawn upon them, and it became evident that we had ruled Vendôme out of our itinerary, the shock of realising, not only that they were to be denied an opportunity of refuting the charges preferred, but that they were destined to leave the town branded as three of the biggest and most unsuccessful liars ever encountered, had well-nigh reduced Daphne and Jill to tears. And when, upon the sickly resumption of negotiations, it appeared highly probable that they would not be permitted to proceed, Jill had wept openly. . . .

France is nothing if not emotional.

Visibly affected by her distress, the police had immediately become less hostile. Observing this, Daphne had discreetly followed her cousin's example. Before the sledgehammer blows of their lamentation two gendarmes began to sniff and a third broke down. The girls redoubled their sobs. They were practically there.

"You never saw anything like it," concluded Jonah. "Within three minutes four of the police were crying, and the head bottle-washer was beating his breast and imploring me in broken accents to explain away my guilt. I threw five hundred francs on his desk and covered my eyes. tears rolling down his cheeks, he pushed the notes under a blotting-pad and wrote laboriously upon a buff sheet. woman was produced. Between explosions of distress she made us some tea. In common decency we couldn't push off for a while. Besides, I wasn't quite sure that it was all However, everybody seemed too overcome to say anything, so, after a bit, we chanced it and made a move for the car. To my relief, they actually helped us in, and two of them fought as to who should start us up." He looked round coldly. "And now, perhaps, you'll be good enough to tell us what we've been punished for.'

I told what there was to tell.

As I came to the end, Berry nodded at

"Yes," he said unctuously, "and let this be a lesson to you, brother.'

Speechless with indignation, our cousin regarded him.

At length—

"What d'you mean?" he demanded.

Berry raised his eyebrows. "I hardly think," he said, "the penalty for-er-loitering would have been so vindictive."

The second story in this series will appear in the next number.



ST. LUKE'S SUMMER.

OVELY these brief and placid Autumn days. Where mellow sunlight through the garden strays; Last blooms mature, look at their lord, the sun, As though for them summer were just begun.

Fragrant the air with scent of mignonette-One last green tuft beside the sundial set-Masses of roses clamber overhead, Yellow and pink and dusky damask red.

Lovely these brief and placid Autumn days, Lovelier far than Summer's lavish ways; Since all this beauty, fragrance, colour, sun, Soon will be but a memory fancy-spun.

EDITH DART.

WHERE OUR WEATHER COMES FROM

By R. BRENARD, F.R.Met.Soc.,

Meteorologist to the London-Paris "Air Express,"

AND

HARRY HARPER.

Technical Secretary of the Civil Aerial Transport Committee.

ILLUSTRATED BY ADRIAN HILL

" WHEN two Englishmen meet," wrote Dr. Johnson, "their first talk is of the weather."

So it has been, is still, and most likely always will be. And that it should be so is not surprising. In these small British Islands of ours we have the weather brought more to our notice—obtruded more constantly on our daily thoughts and observations—than the inhabitants of any other quarter of the globe.

And why should this be so? Well, the answer is simple enough up to a point, and most readers will probably have a general notion of it. We owe our extraordinary climate to the fact that Britain stands, not only at a sort of outpost of Europe, but happens also to lie in a part of the world where great weather systems meet in conflict; which means that while we earth-folk cower and run for shelter, there are Titans of the upper air who fight out battles which tell their story in wind, rain, and storm.

What makes our weather so wonderful, so unique, is its constant change. There is no climate in the world which can touch it in this respect. To-day, treasured in our Meteorological Office, are maps in hundreds of thousands of the weather we have experienced in days gone by. And no two of them are exactly alike. Each differs from the others in some particular, large or small. We, by repeating ourselves, may become wearisome, but you may take it for granted that the weather never does. We may like it or loathe it, praise it or curse it, but, whatever it may do, it will certainly never bore us.

What we have to remind ourselves, if we

are to know something of the origin of that weather which afflicts us one day and delights us the next, is that we stand sentinel, so to say, on the brink of the Atlantic. To the north-east and north-west of us lie great areas of settled weather. To the south and south-west also there are vast systems which represent weather of a known and definite type. And what happens, what explains the constant changes of our climate here, is that sometimes we come under the influence of one of these systems, and sometimes of another; while, as an added perplexity, we have occasionally an intermediate and uncertain kind of climatea type we might almost call a special British brand—which we experience during those intervals between the departure of one type of weather from afar and the arrival of the next.

From such nondescript spells we may expect anything or nothing. They may be pleasant, or they may be beastly, just according to the whim of some weather imp aloft.

II.

You want to be able to obtain a great bird'seye view, to look down as on a map over land and sea, if you are to get a real impression of where it is our weather comes from.

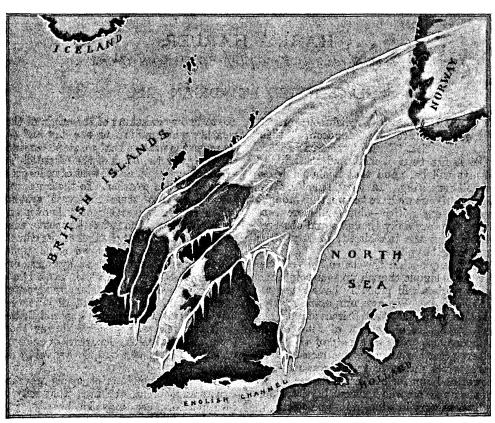
Suppose, therefore, just to help us form this mental picture, we assume that we take our seats in an aeroplane and ascend higher and higher until, with an immensely keen vision from some vast height, we can look for thousands of miles over land and sea. Shall we be able, then, to see those distant "factories" where so much of our weather is made? Certainly we shall, and it is quite likely, too, we may discern some of it actually

on its way to us.

The first plain fact to stand revealed is this—the ingredients of our British weather are mixed in four great zones, two of which lie north of us and two south. First let us throw a glance a thousand miles or so northwest. There, over cold, void Greenland, broods a great zone of settled weather—a "high-pressure" system, meteorologists

from Greenland we have, in fact, as a rule, not so much to cavil at, save that in winter some of us may find it severe.

Away north-east of us the story is different. Here, now, we look towards Scandinavia, away above cold seas and mountains to those Siberian plains across which the bleak east wind, rushing pitilessly, acquires that icy chill which makes it "neither fit for man nor beast." Both, in fact, hate it, and on many days in



THE ICY GRIP.

Sometimes, as suggested graphically here, that great cold weather system from Scandinavia creeps down remorselessly until it has invaded our air-space and forced our mild weather from the Atlantic to move of northward or eastward instead of pass above it. Then, for a time, we may think we are on the eve of another ice age.

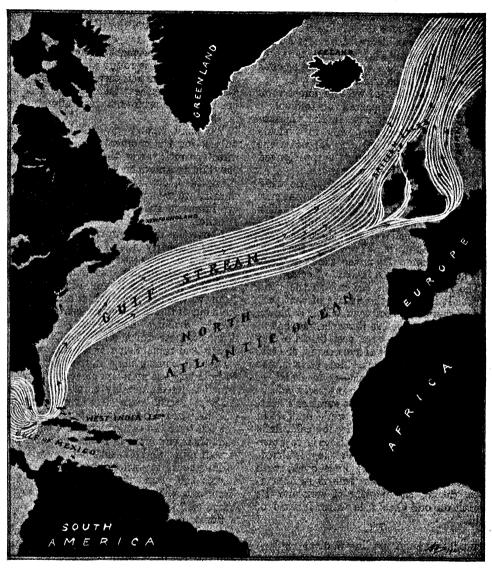
call it. What it means so far as we are concerned, and in simple terms, is that the conditions which come to us from there in winter are of a pronounced frosty type—a period of what we should call "seasonable" weather, though the cold may prove arduous; while in summer, should this zone spread southward and envelop us, we may look for a spell such as will cause us to cease, at any rate for the time, from the worst of our grumbles. With this weather

winter, with its freezing breath, it renders unbearable conditions which, in its absence, we should find we could put up with pretty well.

It is from Scandinavia and those bitter store-houses of cold which lie further east that we get the most rigorous of our winter weather. All of us, for example, will remember the numbing grip which held us just before last Christmas. That came to us from Scandinavia. The fringes of

that greaticy realm, thrusting out slowly above the North Sea, spread over us a mantle which grew colder and colder as the days went by: or, altering the simile, it seemed, rather, to some of us as though a

grip. Sometimes, though, this northeastern weather will play the very dickens with us. That great winter of 1895, so long remembered, crept down across Scandinavia, and we lay for weeks in a



OUR WARMING STREAM.

Born, so to say, in the Gulf of Mexico, into which the winds force great volumes of water which the sun heats, the Gulf Stream flows to us across 4,000 miles of ocean, and warms, not only our land, but the air above it, seeing that the winds which blow over the surface of this current are given a balminess they could not otherwise possess.

hand of ice had stretched out to seize us from that grim north-east.

Luckily for us, however, there were waves of warmer weather which played on this intruding zone of cold, and by degrees it shrank back and lost its chilly

freezing air which came to us from north or east.

When, in summer, this Scandinavian weather gets the upper hand and drives other systems from the air above us, there is little we need fear. The terrors of January

may, in July, be transmuted into something very different. While in one case we pile on clothes, in the other we feel we want to strip them off. Sometimes this Scandinavian weather, while we are basking in its summer phase, joins up with an ally from the southwest-a projection from the g eat fineweather system over the Doldrums. Then warm summer conditions become for a time almost an institution, owing to the grip such an alliance can gain on the regions In June and July this year just above us. such a combination of weather forces took place, and nothing appeared able to displace them. The mercury rose in the thermometer till we were sweltering in a shade temperature of over 90 degrees, while the whole country was subjected to a prolonged drought which ruined many crops.

Even that implacable enemy, the wind from the east, comes to us in summer in quite another guise. Actually it turns itself into a warm wind, difficult though this may be to believe. And there isn't any camouflage about it. The wind is the same wind. It comes from the same quarter. But now it blows hot instead of cold.

The reason of this lies not in the wind itself. It is due to the nature of that part of the earth's surface over which it blows. This east wind, before it reaches us, has to pass, in its course, over vast tracts of flat land. Were its track above oceans, the tale might be very different. But, as it is, the fact of importance is this-great tracts of land, though they become intensely cold in winter, hold and retain the summer's heat. The east wind, therefore, while it flows in winter over plains which are icy cold, finds in summer that these same plains have grown so heated that to pass over them is almost like blowing over some huge oven, with the result that by the time it reaches us here, during the months of sunshine, its breath on our cheeks is warm instead of chill.

III.

STILL let us feign, circling in our aeroplane at some huge height, that we turn our gaze southward, now, over thousands of miles of ocean—right across there, south-west, until we sight land near the Gulf of Mexico.

It is from somewhere about this region, now here and now there, that we get the weather which gives our climate its chief repute for change. From this part of the world, too, comes that great warming agency which, were it withdrawn or diverted, might throw our weather back into the

harshness of Labrador. One refers, of course, to the Gulf Stream. Its heated waters, pouring out of the Gulf of Mexico, do not lose their warmth even after passing across 4,000 miles of ocean, and, when they reach and bathe our shores, they give us a temperature we could not otherwise hope for in this northerly region of the world.

But factors which change, rather than those which are permanent, concern us more just now, and it is round about the Gulf of Mexico, and further east, that there is a ceaseless "weather factory" which influences most profoundly our climate here

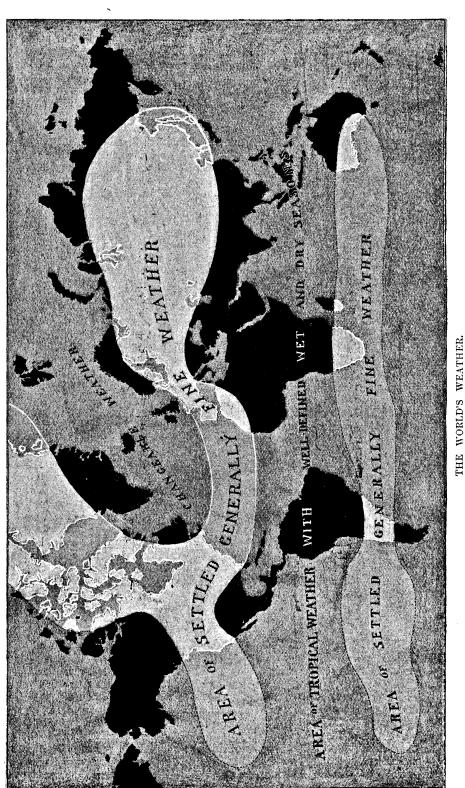
in England.

We shall hardly grasp what happens unless, for the moment, we glance more directly south across the Atlantic between the South American and African coasts. Along here, day after day and month by month, we reckon upon the existence of an immense sphere or realm of constant weather.

Above this area, however—that is to say, on our northerly side of it-there is a sort of fringe or scattered zone which is in a state of more or less continual instability. You might call it, if you like, the place from which bad weather comes, because from out of this unrest storm-centres emerge, which, drifting north - east across the Atlantic, bear down on Britain with their clouds and rain. Some, it is true, pursuing an erratic course, may happen fortunately to miss us, but numbers come with an aim which is uncomfortably sure. Ireland, on its west coast, bears first brunt of many. The moisture-laden winds, passing in from the sea over the colder land, are so chilled that their vapour falls in the shape of persistent rain; and it is this, coupled with the mildness and moistness of the wind, which makes the grass of Ireland so green, so luxuriant, that it has won its right to the name of "the Emerald Isle."

Some of the storm-centres from the Atlantic—they are known as "depressions" scientifically—come swiftly up the Channel and strike our south-west coast, passing thence inland and traversing England—with much discomfort to its inhabitants—and afterwards vanishing somewhere on an unwelcome journey across Northern Europe.

Sometimes such a storm, an unusually large one, perhaps, in size, will divide for some reason into two parts—one considerably smaller than the other—just before it assails our shores. The larger portion, making in, say, above Ireland, may veer



Here, pictured graphically, and in quite general, non-technical terms, is an idea of those wast belts or zon-s of atmospheric pressure which govern the great weather trends and movements above the surface of our globe.

off north-east over upper England, while the smaller section, moving as fast as a train, will dart up the Channel and over London, afflicting its bewildered citizens with three or four different kinds of weather during the course of a single

Occasionally, were we only in some position to see them, we might observe as many as three storm-areas or "depressions" moving across the Atlantic, one behind the other in a procession, and all bound unkindly towards these shores. Sometimes, in fact, these areas of bad weather will travel so precisely along a certain track as to give an impression that they may be guided by some special impulse or plan. Then again, however, they will confound all prophecy and upset all experience by swinging off abruptly almost at right angles to their course; and organised meteorology is still a science so young that the causes of these, and other such eccentricities, are wrapped more or less in mystery.

VERY unpleasant things may happen sometimes when a storm-centre from the Atlantic, after a journey of three thousand or four thousand miles, finds, as it nears our shores, that there is a rival weather system in the field.

All one can say then is, "Citizens, beware!" For, while these combatants fight things out a mile or so above our heads, we may suffer for a time from such an abomination of weather as will tax our invention to find adjectives to describe it, skilled though cruel experience may now have made us in this regard.

A case very much in point, bringing us conditions for a spell so unspeakable that we all have bitter recollections of them, occurred during the cold weather of last December. The great high-pressure system from Scandinavia had driven its icy wedge south-eastward into England. Gradually, day by day, it gained further ground, until we began to read of temperatures so low that they made us think of the Arctic Circle. On one particular day, indeed, Iceland was for the moment a warmer place than London!

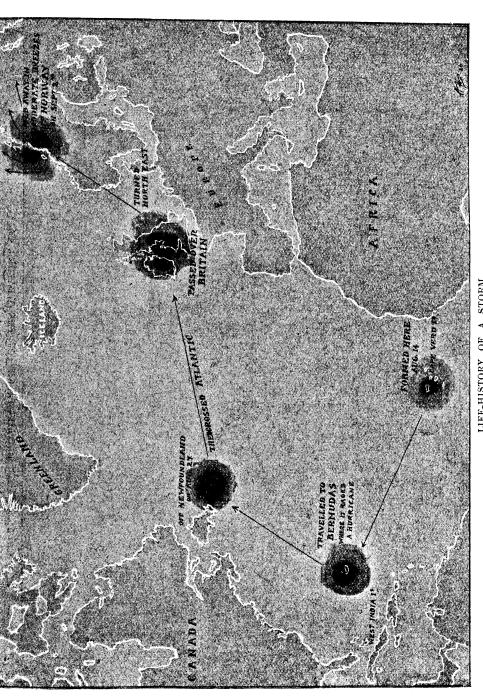
And then into this grim phalanx from the regions of ice and snow there charged suddenly a storm-centre which bore with it the warmth of Southern seas. Heat met cold in a violent contrast. The Atlantic "depression," being a small weak thing in comparison with that great cold area against which it had pitted itself, came off so badly second-best that it was obliterated, and vanished, in fact, from the weather maps; but it was not vanquished without a struggle.

Londoners, though they could not very well stand at the ringside of that combat, were affected by it sensibly, none the less. They suffered, in truth, a day of misery. The warm moisture in the winds of the Atlantic storm, impinging on the blasts from the chilly north, was turned into a rain which reached our streets as snow; and this snow, degenerating into an icy slush which seemed to be freezing one moment and melting the next, made getting about suffering felt that they could stand no more.

Stranger even, though perhaps not so drastic, may be the local effect of some weather conflict which, entirely without our knowing it, is taking place almost directly above our heads. One of the oddest and most impressive of such phenomena occurred only a few months ago, and its effect was to plunge London at noon into a darkness as of night.

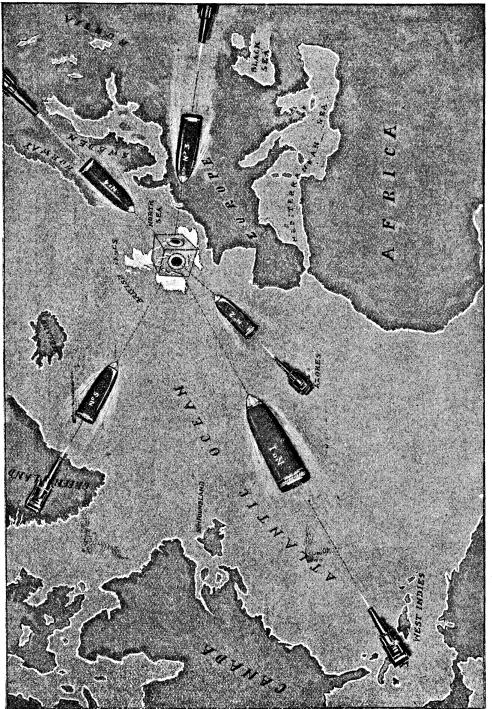
Here, again, we had a mild air current stealing in from up the Channel and becoming involved with a wind which was charged with all the cold of the winter east. Just over London, not more than a thousand feet or so high, the moisture of the warm wind became so chilled that it condensed into mist or cloud, and this cloud, impregnated quickly as it was by all that smoke and dust which float over a mighty city, drew a curtain above us so opaque that the light from above failed almost wholly to penetrate it, and, though there was no fog in the streets, we had to adapt ourselves to conditions which were practically those of night.

BRIEFLY, then, we have Britain as a sort of target of the weather—an idea you will see worked out graphically in one of our illustrations. Storm guns are fired at us. Great projectiles of cloud and rain travel thousands of miles to pour their torrents upon London. Those vast brooding zones of the frozen north stretch icy tentacles to seize us; and then, from somewhere south, thrusting up an arm which, for the moment, drives all else pell-mell into the background, comes one of those fine-weather systems which make us throw open our coats and



LIFE-HISTORY OF A STORM.

Sometimes organised meteorology can trace the movements of a storm from the time it forms until after various wanderings, it vanishes or dies away Here, for unstance, as recorded officially, is the history of one particular storm which, during its "tife," travelled erratically for a distance of more than 6,000 miles.



BRITAIN-TARGET OF THE WEATHER.

Bombarded as we are by weather systems from various quarters, this picture shows the chief of those missiles which, one after the other, are discharged against us. No. 1 shell, the biggest, carries at from the Azores. Shell No. 3 carries those biting caser, carries at from the Azores. Shell No. 3 carries those biting casterly winds we distike so much. No. 4 shell, from Scandinavia, is very and in winter, though it may be hot in summer. No. 5, from Greenland, brings us frosts in winter and settled, incomes.

think of islands where the sun will always shine.

But even at such expansive moments it behoves us to keep in mind that Russian bear. He is always over there, crouching behind his banks of snow, and ready to stretch hundreds of miles with a paw which, at its merest touch, makes us think, not of palm groves, but of our winter wraps and furs.

Industriously, too, all the time—with an industry we might be excused, indeed, for calling misplaced—there is that "weather factory" south-west across the Atlantic, which, gaining munitions from the disturbances above the great settled zone, speeds storm after storm towards us with the precision almost of an artillery barrage.

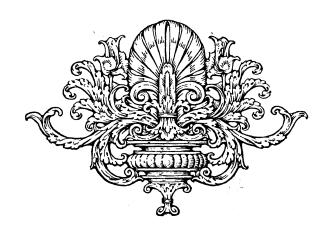
No wonder we talk about our weather! It is a tribute, in fact, to our imperturbability that we do not talk about it more. Any volatile, irascible nation, scourged and suffering as we are in a sort of "meltingpot" of weather, might allow the subject to become a perfect obsession with them. Certainly they would find it hard to do what we still do, and that is to smile on an April day when, by some scurvy trick of the Clerk of the Weather—or, rather, by some lightning raid from an outpost of the north—we shiver in an air which is fitted more to mid-December than it is to spring.

Always, though, at the back of everything we have a consolation—always we find that there is a silver lining to the cloud. Our weather, even at its worst, just escapes reaching that stage when it can be no

longer borne—when man packs up and goes, and leaves things to Nature and the hardiest of beasts.

And we must never forget that at its best, when our weather in Britain puts on a smile instead of a frown, when it is on its very nicest behaviour, there is no climate in the world which makes an appeal so subtly charming.

Hats off, therefore, to those fairies who work so unobtrusively and yet so ceaselessly to temper the rigours of our climateto that Gulf Stream which soothes our shores warmingly, and those mild prevailing winds from the south-west and west which do their best to thaw us and to restore us to something like equanimity when we have been pinched and chilled by a visitation from the north or east. These are our faithful, our never-failing friendsthese waters and the winds which warm us. With them, despite the trials of a climate which is only for the strong, we have made of Britain a great workshop, in which weather, though often it may hamper and impede, can do no worse than that. We have grown superior to it—we have subju-Things go on in spite of the gated it. weather. But take away that Gulf Stream, shift those prevailing winds, and the ice of the waiting north would close around us. And it is well that we should realise this. It is well that we should remember what we owe to that gentle stream and those balmy winds. They are a dispensation of Providence-Dame Nature's kindly gifts to a race which she must think is worthy of them.



THE CHAMELEON

By E. ARNOT ROBERTSON

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

TAVE a cigarette, Kenyott?" said the young subaltern, breaking the strained silence.

The other man's eyes were fixed on the distant hills behind which the sun was sinking; he seemed absorbed in his dreams, and it was with an effort that he recalled his thoughts.

"No, thank you," he said, in his soft, deliberate voice; "I don't smoke."

Neither did he drink, Leslie remembered two negative attributes which struck him as typical of the man. He smiled disdainfully and offered his case to his sister, wondering, as he did so, why Diana had married the man. He had come up on leave from Wadje-Korai, where his regiment was stationed, to meet his new brother-inlaw, prepared by his sister's enthusiastic letters for a rather magnificent individual. Instead, he had found Kenyott, a thin little man, very colourless and self-effacing. Leslie had nicknamed him "The Chameleon" because he never disagreed with anyone if he could help it. Also there was something fishy about the man. been in the Indian Army, or perhaps still was; his position appeared to be vague. During the War he went to France, and then, while his regiment remained on active service, he had been suddenly recalled and sent back to this God-forsaken station on the Afghan border. He spent his time in long shooting expeditions. Duties he apparently had none.

The three began discussing the spread of unrest in India, and the likelihood of the

hill tribes rising.

"Not the least chance," Leslie announced, with the confident wisdom of twenty years. "Only wish there were; we're all getting bean-fed with nothing to do at Wadje. There are continual alarms, but I guess the beggars are too jolly scared really.

Kenyott said nothing, but continued to stare at the hills, behind which the tribesmen were said to be turbulent. His silence was one of his most annoying qualities.

the last few days Leslie had been laying himself out to provoke "The Chameleon," to see if the fellow had any spirit at all, and he had only succeeded in working himself into a state of exasperation. Kenyott accepted all the young man's insults with a bland smile, and remarked that the heat was trying.

"I wonder you're not scared to remain unprotected so close to the frontier, and chance getting your throat cut," the boy

added, with a contemptuous glance.

Again "The Chameleon" took no notice. He walked to the edge of the balcony and spoke in some unfamiliar dialect. Neither of the others had heard the arrival of the native, who stood in the evening sunlight, salaaming profoundly. Leslie had never seen him before. Diana apparently had: she went dead white. "My God!" she murmured under her breath.

The native, a cadaverous-looking individual, was not of the Border type, but evidently belonged to the interior. He was gesticulating with a bony hand in the direction of the hills. Finally he drew his hand across his throat suggestively and pointed down to the plains. Kenyott shrugged his shoulders and turned back to "The fellow says game is the others. very plentiful in the hills just now. I am going to see if he's right. Fetch him something to eat, please, Diana, and let him rest here as long as he likes. I'm going to get ready."

Diana was on her feet, her hands stretched

out appealingly.

"Oh, no, no, Jim, not again! If you love me, don't go!" she said piteously. Kenyott remained unresponsive. "Haven't you done enough yet? Why should it always be you? If you must go, take Leslie, take anyone, but don't go alone again! Please, Jim! I can't bear it!"

"My dear girl!" remonstrated "The Chameleon," gently disengaging her hands from his shoulders. And then, as she still clung to him, sobbing: "Cheer up, dear! 1

shall be all right. Run along and get the old chap something eatable; he must be

pretty near exhausted.

He walked leisurely into the bungalow, and took down his rifle from the wall. Leslie followed, all his vague annovance brought to a head.

"Are you serious about this shooting

expedition?" he demanded.

"Obviously," said "The Chameleon," scientifically packing cartridges into a wallet.

"And it doesn't matter a hang to you that Diana's cutting up rough about it?"

No answer.

"D'you hear, you rotten cad?"

"Pass me the other case," said "The Chameleon," and for some reason the boy

obeved.

"I think you are a perfect cur," he said hotly, "and I don't care what you do with your rotten hide, but if you don't care enough for your wife to give up some shooting, at any rate I care enough for my sister to see you don't go alone, since that seems

to worry her, and if you go I shall go, too!"
"Very well," said "The Chameleon."
"Only I warn you that you will quite

probably get killed."

"Because you can't shoot straight, I suppose. Or are you frightened of the natives? You know as well as I do there's no chance of a rising."

"They've risen," said Kenyott shortly.

There was a short silence of surprise, and then the young subaltern whistled. "Are you sure?" he asked slowly. "If they've really started moving at last, it'll be pretty serious. I take it you aren't going in that direction?"

"Yes—must."

"But-but what on earth for?"

"Because I am a sort of tribal god in the disturbed locality. If you insist on coming, go and say good-bye to your sister. We'll get off as soon as possible.'

The boy hesitated.

"Aren't you going to say good-bye to her

yourself?" he asked in amazement.
"I—daren't," said "The Chameleon" slowly.

The sun was climbing into a brazen sky from which all colour had faded; the glare and heat were unbearable; even the lizards that abound in the rocky ground had hidden under the stones to escape the burning rays. The only living things in sight were two white men, urging their horses up the stony

track in the treacherous hills that look so pleasantly blue from the distance. had travelled all night, incomplete and rather hostile silence. Fatigue had no visible effect on "The Chameleon," but Leslie, so weary he could hardly keep his balance, was riding with his eyes half closed to shut out the blinding glare that struck up from the overheated stones. At the summit of the rise his horse stopped of its own accord.

"I can't go any further," he said.

Kenyott glanced back at the limp figure compassionately—with that droop at the corners of his mouth, the boy was so like his sister—then his face hardened.

"You'll go on till I tell you to stop," he

said over his shoulder.

"I won't!"

Kenyott turned in the saddle.

"Understand this," he said quietly, "if you obey my orders, you may get killed by the natives, but if you don't obey my orders, you will be killed by me now!"

So they moved on again in silence.

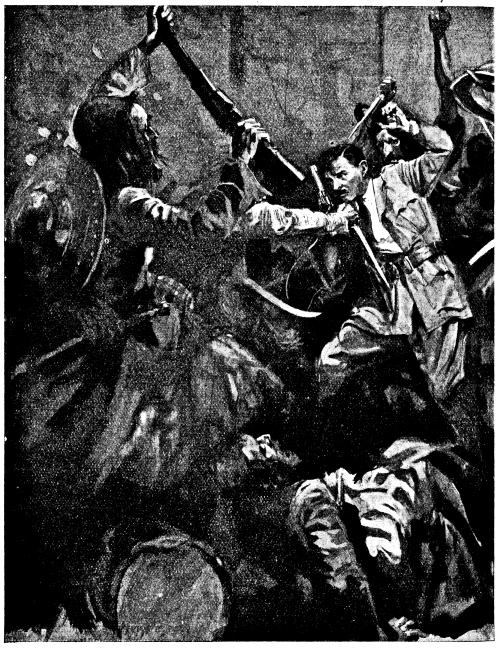
The scenery was rugged but monotonous; the track wound between bare rocks covered with stunted bushes. There is very little rainfall in the hills, and what there is runs away too quickly to be of much use. There were no trees nor any sign of human habitation. Folk who are peaceably inclined live in the relatively fertile valleys. The fighting Afghan, whose life is passed in a chronic state of war, has the instinct of taking cover highly developed. He rarely lets himself be seen; nevertheless, he is always

They were emerging from a narrow defile on to a sloping plain, when Kenyott suddenly slipped down behind a jutting corner of rock and drew his horse after him.

"Go on," he hissed in the boy's ear, "and when you hear a shot, fall, whether you

are hit or not."

Rocks and bushes were shimmering in the heat-haze, but there was a more substantial reason for the sudden and scarcely perceptible movement of one of the bushes on the hillside. A shot rang out, and the boy dropped on to his horse's neck. tired brute stopped and stood with legs splayed out and head drooping. A man wriggled stealthily out of the bush and slunk down the hillside. The moving figure, vaguely outlined against the stone and scrub of almost the same brown, presented a very poor target. Kenyott, in the shade of the rock, cuddled his rifle . lovingly against his cheek, took a long sight,



"There was a howl, and then the circle closed in on them.

and fired. The man rolled over and lay still.

Leslie lifted himself unhurt, but rather white of face. Dazed, he stared for a few seconds at the dead man lying in a crumpled heap a few yards away, then he turned angrily to Kenyott, who had come up leading his horse.

"Look here," he began rather shakily, "kindly remember this is the last time I

act as your decoy. If you are too much of a coward to do your own——"

He stopped, and with a sick horror watched Kenyott take a pocket-knife and cut a device—three sides of an oblong with a diagonal—on the man's naked chest.

Kenyott straightened himself, cleaned the knife with sand, and led the way to the largest patch of shade.

"He was a Manwai—that's the tribe of



'Don't fight!' yelled Kenyott. 'Can't afford to be killed!'"

which I'm a god—and I've ornamented him with the Gennah death-mark. The Manwais and the Gennahs are the two tribes that are rising. About the time of the Creation a Manwai stole a sheep from one of the Gennahs, and the Gennah killed him. Then the thief's family slaughtered the avenger's family, and so the Manwai tribe in force wiped out the village where the Gennah lived, and the two tribes have been

at each other's throats ever since. Now they've sunk the feud of perhaps five hundred years to go for us. But they are still very suspicious of each other. We'll take this chap with us."

They tethered their horses in the shade and rested. Kenyott sat hunched up, with the dead scout by his side. Leslie sprawled at full length and tried to sleep, but the sight of the half-dried blood oozing from

the cuts on the dead man's chest haunted him when he shut his eyes; he was very young, and this first encounter with death was not pleasant. He turned on his side and studied the man beside him—this soft-voiced, insignificant little man, with the unblinking light blue eyes, who took death so calmly, and whom he had so despised. A possible explanation of Kenyott's station on the Border flashed across his mind.

"How did you become the god of this place, Kenyott?" he asked, without a

trace of the old animosity.

"By chance. About a year before the War I stumbled on the head village of the Manwais, and found the whole place down with cholera. Under the bungling of the priests, cholera was always fatal; so when I managed to pull some of them through, they elected me a high-class god. One man I saved acts as spy now, and warns me when there's going to be trouble. You'd better sleep, if you can; we shall start again at sunset."

It was night when the two men reached the village. The whole place seemed to be seething with excitement. All the Manwai fighting men were assembled, and there was a continual stream of figures passing swiftly among the huts. Dim, vaguely seen forms moved in the black shadows, and in the centre of the village, where fires were burning —for at that altitude the night winds blow cold even in the hot weather—the flames flickered over the rhythmically swaying figure of a man performing a knifedance. Occasionally a group of Gennahs walked past, tall, magnificently built men, bearded and handsome, whose dignified carriage contrasted with the quick, gliding movement of the smaller, lithe Manwais. The Gennahs were encamped further down the valley, not being over-trustful of their old enemies, whom they had only joined to slaughter the still more odious British. They never entered the village unless heavily armed, and in parties of not less than four.

Leaving their horses outside, the two men entered unseen, moving round under the cover of the encircling wall until they were well away from the main gateway. Kenyott's arrival, apparently from out of the shadows, had the effect of an apparition. There was a clamour that sank to a tense silence, broken only by the soft hiss of intaken breath as each man instinctively gripped the nearest weapon to hand. The headman, alarmed by the noise and subse-

quent silence, came out of his hut, prepared to quell some disturbance between the tribes. When he perceived Kenyott, he was not reassured. At the moment Kenyott was the last person he wished to see. At any other time the god would have been welcome; on the eve of an attack against his nation his presence might complicate matters. The god would see the two tribes were united, and would guess the reason, if his divine intelligence had not already informed him, which was probable. This was the third time he had turned up at an awkward moment. Gods have a habit of doing these things.

Leslie followed the little white-clad figure through lines of motionless, scowling men to the centre of the town, and there Kenyott stopped, and instantly the tension, which seemed to have arrested all movement, relaxed. Suddenly they had become the centre of an excited, gesticulating crowd. Then Leslie realised the aptness of the nickname he had bestowed in derision. Kenyott was very like a chameleon; the man took colour from his environment. In civilisation he was a nonentity; here, among extraordinary surroundings, he was a man, dominating a crowd of savages by the force

of his personality.

"What," he asked, designating a group of Gennahs, "does the presence of these

reptiles mean?"

A wave of movement passed over the whole crowd, like wind over high grass, and the moonlight glittered on fierce eyes and drawn knives. Leslie shivered. Not knowing the hill dialect, he did not know that Kenyott had just offered the greatest possible insult to the entire Gennah tribe, but he realised the meaning of the most impressive sound there is—the angry snarl of a crowd. There was a furious commotion among the Gennahs, where the older men were trying to restrain the hotter spirits, realising that it would be bad policy to attack an apparently privileged person while themselves on semi-hostile ground.

One man broke away from the others and sprang forward. Leslie caught a glimpse of a drawn knife and of Kenyott's motionless figure, but the attacker had leaped through the short space that separated them before he had time to interfere. Kenyott stiffened slightly, but made no attempt to defend himself. The knife hung poised over him, and Kenyott remained absolutely still. The knife flashed down, and was arrested just before it reached his throat. For a few

nerve-breaking seconds the huge native stood over the little man, who waited, staring up with calm, expressionless eyes, like those of a snake. Suddenly, with a superstitious shudder, the native dropped the knife. It fell point downward in the hard ground and stuck there quivering. The man slunk back into the crowd.

Kenyott wiped his face with a handker-

"The British Raj," he continued, as if nothing had happened, "is the Manwais father and mother, the shade at noon, and the coolness of water at the end of the day. I have told you all this before. Moreover. I have told you that whoever rebels is cursed by the gods, and shall disappear as the dust does when the rains begin.

There was a pause. The Manwai headman looked even more troubled than before. So the god did know what was in the air!

"And yet," said Kenyott suddenly, in a voice that made the whole crowd jump, "I find the Manwais prepared for war and united with the Gennah tribe! Why have the Gennals left their territory and come here in force? Has not your experience taught you to fear their cunning? In the past the Gennahs proved themselves dangerous enemies. To-day they are more dangerous than ever, for they are treacherous friends!"

This time the god had overestimated his power. The Gennah pride would not suffer two such insults to pass unavenged, and the Manwais were bound to support their allies. There was a howl, and then the circle

closed in on them.

"Don't fight!" yelled Kenyott. "Can't afford to be killed!"

Leslie went down, under the impact of the charge, with a crash that knocked the breath out of his body. For a few seconds he suffered agony, as the trampling feet of many men surged over him, crushing and suffocating him. In the struggle he received a stunning blow on the head, black veils of unconsciousness came floating down, and the drumming of the blood in his ears rose to a roar that drowned the din Then the soft blackness closed above. round him altogether.

He came back slowly to a confused consciousness. The working of his brain had been forcibly arrested; now that it had started again, it moved slowly, and it was with a feeling of complete detachment that he took in the details of the scene, as if they did not concern him personally. He laughed weakly because Kenyott, with his shirt torn

and a smear of blood across his face, presented such a contrast to the meek little man he had known. The sound of his own laugh brought him to his senses. Seeing he was conscious, two of the Manwais bent and jerked him to his feet. They had not killed Kenyott, nor, in consequence, Leslie, because of a lurking belief in the former's miraculous powers. Now the Gennahs were claiming his death. They were becoming angrier at the continued, though weakening, resistance of the other side, and intimated that if they were not allowed to wipe out the insults in the blood of this white man, they would massacre the whole village. There was a murmur of approval from the mass of Gennahs.

"Give him to us, or-" their headman threatened, and he pointed to his followers. who had begun to finger their rifles. The Manwai chief was silent. Between the material danger of the well-armed Gennahs and the intangible possibility of a curse. the choice was obvious. He glanced at Kenyott, whose face betrayed neither fear nor even interest in the discussion-he looked almost as if he did not care.

"But if we kill the god, bad luck will fall

on us," he reiterated weakly.

"Bah, it is only a white man!" Gennah chief spat on the ground with disgust. And then the old Manwai priest stepped forward.

Let him prove that he is a god," he

He took the kukri of the Manwai chief and thrust the blade into the embers of the

"We will see oh, we will see if he is a god! Fire is a woman only gods can hold. We will see." He shuffled over to Kenyott and cut the rope that bound his hands. Then followed a pause of perhaps ten minutes. The sky in the east was red with a threat of dawn; around them the expectant silence of the night seemed to be waiting for something, to be watching the little human drama going on below; men looked at each other inquiringly, wondering what the priest meant to do.

He tore off a strip of the dirty white robe he wore, and, binding the hilt of the knife to render it less hot to the touch, drew it out. There was a shower of brilliant sparks, for the tip was almost red-hot.

"If he can bear the touch of fire, we will know he is divine, and if not-" And he chuckled.

Kenyott shivered slightly, and his hands,

clenched by his side, were quivering with the tension of the muscles. A faint sigh "Ah-h!" long drawn out, went up from the spectators. The blood-lust of the Afghan -one of the cruellest races of the worldhad been aroused; now it was about to be satisfied—the man was human, after all! Leslie felt the grip of his two guards tighten on his arms. He was not a coward, but it was horrible to die like this, without a chance of fighting. He closed his eyes, hoping the killing would be done quickly.

There came the hiss of burning metal on a cooler substance, and the smell of scorching flesh. Kenyott's face was like a white mask, the mouth contracted by the rigid cheek muscles into a kind of grin. For perhaps thirty seconds he held the red-hot knife in his outstretched hand—thirty seconds while the metal bit into the flesh, burning down on to the bone. Then he released his hold, and the weapon dropped. stantly a great shout went up from the crowd, a shout of acclamation: "The god! It is the god!" they yelled.

Inured and indifferent to pain as these men were, none of them could have endured that ordeal unflinchingly. They came forward and cut Kenyott free. He leaned back against the mud wall of the hut, with one hand buried in his pocket to exclude

the air.

"What I told you is true," he said. "Go down to the valley head above the Gennah camp and see!"

Half of the Manwai tribe streamed out of the village in the direction indicated. The Gennahs gathered into one band.

They would have withdrawn to their camp had they dared, but any attempt at retreat would be taken as an acknowledgment of guilt. Some of them guessed what this proof of their treachery would turn out to be; two hostile parties cannot suddenly become firm friends. It was more than likely that some private quarrel had arisen and been avenged. Who had done it they neither knew nor cared; the Manwais would take vengeance against the whole tribe. From outside the town came a howl of anger, proclaiming that the mutilated body had been found.

"We'll get out now," said Kenyott.

No one hindered their going. Gennahs, not waiting to be attacked, threw themselves on the Manwais that remained in the town. Now that the strain was over, Kenyott was reeling with fatigue. Leslie steadied him with his arm as they made their way out between the stabbing, grunting, struggling groups. The Afghans are all individual fighters, and after the first rush they broke up and fought in twos and

As they rode away in the pale cold light of the dawn, Leslie's horse drew level with

Kenvott's.

"I apologise-sir!" he said, with a wholly foreign note of respect in his voice. "I behaved like a perfect cub. I can't think how you refrained from kicking me."

Kenyott smiled.

"Looking back on it, neither can I."

"Well, why didn't you?"

"Because Diana asked me not to," said that lady's meek little husband,

RUST.

MY lady has a winter gown, She looks so dainty-sweet, That all the leaves come dancing down To kiss her little feet.

The dying woods, all golden-red, The weaver caught and spun, And twisted in a wondrous thread Of warm October sun.

My lady says the colour's rust, The latest Autumn shade; It may be, but the fairies must Have helped when it was made! E. PAYNE-KENT.

CHANGE OF TREATMENT

By W. PETT RIDGE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

RS. ROLLER'S guests on the Amorita were beginning to find some trouble in hiding the circumstance that they had tired of each other's company, when the announcement came. To-morrow, or perhaps the next day, the island would be in sight. The captain, on furnishing the news at lunch, received a hearty round of applause. He bowed to the lady at his right hand as though to transfer to her credit for the achievement.

"My dear friends," said Mrs. Roller, standing up, and moving articles on the table that all might see her; her secretary, Mr. Allinson, hushed the remoter folk into silence-"you will have gained, from the information just conveyed, that the object of this voyage is nearly accomplished." ("Hear, hear!" from Mr. Allinson.) "Six weeks is generally counted as a long time, but I hope—nay, I know—that the period occupied by the journey from Southampton has seemed to you nothing more than a passing moment-little more than the twinkling of an eye." The lack of cheering seemed to goad the lady into an argumentative manner. "If now and again the trip has appeared to you to include the element of monotony, I trust you have encouraged yourselves by the recollection that you are on a wise and beneficent errand. Don't forget that. As I told you at the start, the few inhabitants of this remote and lonely island which we are nearing get a visit, with newspapers, books, correspondence, and other luxuries, once a year only. Our call will be midway, so to speak. We shall be welcomed with the greater enthusiasm because of the unexpectedness of the call. And if you but exercise your imagination, you can easily conjure up the scene that will meet your eyes once you step on land. For myself, I am so thrilled by the joy of expectancy that I cannot trust my voice.

Ladies and gentlemen, forgive me if I say nothing more "-there was rattling of spoons and muffled ejaculations of relief-" for the present," she added.

An air of gaiety could be observed after the meal. A young couple who had become formally engaged when the Bay of Biscay was past, and had formally broken the engagement several times, now walked about arm-in-arm again and on affectionate terms. Mr. Allinson, excused from his arduous task of organising games, and persuading folk to take a part in them, sat on a deck-chair and held conversation with Mrs. Roller's daughter. Throughout the voyage they had shared a feeling of responsibility for the success of the undertaking, and it was a genuine relief to them to know that shortly the Amorita would be making for England, London, and—but this was known to no one but themselves—the registrar's office in the Borough of Westminster. Because of their secret, and the fact that, of the twenty passengers, some occasionally came within hearing, their talk had a suggestion of incoherency.

"The worst, my dearest soul," said Mr. Allinson tenderly, "is nearly over."

"It has cost mother an awful lot of money," remarked Ethel Roller, "and I can't help thinking it might well have been laid out in a different way. My girls' club in Bethnal Green, for instance.'

" Not one of these people has the slightest touch of gratitude for her hospitality.

"They seem to owe her a grudge," declared the young woman. "But for you, Arthur, and for me, it has been a simply

glorious experience.'

"Darling!" he whispered. He spoke in a louder voice as folk approached. "One cannot help thinking, Miss Roller, that Providence has a sense of humour. There is something distinctly facetious in the idea

of allowing men and women to occupy a distant and a melancholy island when they might have had a joyous existence in the company of their fellow-creatures."

"I am with you there, Mr. Allinson,"

agreed the young woman.

"Dear one," he said, as guests moved off,

" you are to be with me for always."

"Mr. Allinson," cried Mrs. Roller, from the gangway, imperatively, "come here at once. There are a hundred and one details to be settled for to-morrow. about and make yourself pleasant."

For an hour Mrs. Roller walked up and down the cabin, dictating speeches. At the end, the duty of selecting the best and most appropriate was imposed on the young secretary. He was ordered to make two typed copies; one to be read to the islanders, and the other to be preserved amongst the records of the voyage. It was understood that Allinson would write a book describing the adventure, and that Mrs. Roller's name was to appear on the title-page. Eighty-five thousand words in all, and the secretary at times wondered if the material would be sufficient.

The landing, at any rate, provided enough of incident for at least one full chapter. All the anticipated movement on the beach occurred, and the agitation there was at once unmistakable and gratifying. boats were lowered, and Allinson managed to obtain, with his camera, an excellent snapshot of the upsetting of the one which carried Mrs. Roller and some of the most important guests. The captain had asked permission to leave the Amorita in order to witness the ceremony, but Mrs. Roller said his presence was not necessary; it seemed clear that the lady had no intention of sharing the importance of the occasion. Her own costume—impaired now by the action of sea-water---was a singularly happy blend of the uniform worn by an Admiral of the Fleet and a Girl Guide. Allinson, in going last, took with him some of the wooden boxes containing gifts for the islanders, and reminded the irritated captain that Mrs. Roller was the owner of the steam-yacht, that her wishes - aggressive and eccentric as they might appear-had to be

"I know all about that, young man," said the captain abruptly, "but I like having my photo taken as much as most people. I don't want to be left out of the book, do I? Ask yourself the question!"

"Captain," said Allinson, swinging his

camera forward, "be so good as to take up the attitude of a man who has carried through a benevolent scheme across the trackless ocean with the highest possible success, but even at this moment cannot forget a wife and two children in Tredegar Road, Bow. Keep quite still." The camera gave its click. "Thank you very much. A full page—nothing less."

"I shan't forget," threatened the captain, not completely mollified, as the boat pulled off, "the particularly haughty style in which she answered me. I ain't accustomed to be talked to in that manner by any

Excepting the missus!"

Mrs. Roller's address was getting well into its stride when Allinson stepped on the beach. In one semicircle were the guests from the Amorita; in another semicircle, facing them, the inhabitants of the island, not yet recovered from their astonishment, and with their leader, Thomson, as middle man. They glanced around curiously, like children on a birthday, and noted with approval that cases were being discharged from the boat; Mrs. Roller had to call their attention to the circumstance that she had not finished speaking.

"And during the brief space, my good people, that we are with you, it is our earnest desire that you should be in no way impeded or checked by our presence. You will go on with your ordinary duties and occupations, and we shall do nothing more than take pictures of you at your work. I am hopeful you may be able to arrange, for this purpose, a wedding, a christening, and, if possible, a funeral. Already my friends and myself are experiencing a sensation of envy at your calm and peaceful lot. You have the good fortune to be exempt from all the storm and stress that is discovered in closely populated towns. Your lives are serene. What is it Thomson says?"

A movement in the group opposite suggested that the leader should answer the question. Mrs. Roller stopped this quickly.

"Our poet Thomson," she went on, "in unforgettable lines says---- Mr. Allinson, you have left something out on this page."

"'Ease and alternate labour, useful life," quoted the secretary, "'progressive virtue, and approving Heaven."
"Quite so!" she agreed. "And now let

us see what we have brought for these

worthy folk."

There ensued, as the gifts were handed out, a correct amount of gratitude on the part of the recipients; the children were

especially delighted with a box of fireworks. A short speech acknowledging the articles was made by Thomson. He declared he was at a loss for words, but this proved to be an erroneous statement, for he became most remarkably oratorical in describing the charms of life on the island, and in hinting at the deep spirit of content owned by the twenty-one inhabitants. They had no wish, asserted Thomson, to change their lot. Sometimes, in the journals brought by the Government vessel that visited them annually, they read of turmoils and disputes in London and elsewhere, and they never failed to thank their stars most devoutly that Fate had accorded to them an existence replete with happiness. Lines of poetry had been given, and Thomson begged to be allowed to read verses which he himself had composed.

"I think not," interrupted Mrs. Roller firmly. "The line must be drawn somewhere."

"They won't take more than half an hour,"

pleaded Thomson.

"The space," she announced, "will be far better occupied by a treat which my daughter has prepared. She has brought, as her contribution to the gaiety of this delightful island, a series of films giving aspects of life in the capital of our great country. Take us, please, without delay, to your village hall."

"There isn't one," they answered.

"There ought to be. Conduct us, then, to the largest room you have. Mr. Allinson, the bioscope machine is in your charge."
"May I suggest," he mentioned de-

ferentially, "that we ought to be getting back to the yacht? The captain will be

anxious."

"The captain," she retorted, "has not enough sense for that, or for anything. And we go back to the Amorita when I give the word. Meanwhile, don't presume, Mr. Allinson. All you have to do is to carry out instructions.'

The pictures went remarkably well. There was a considerable amount of excited comment from the islander portion of the audience, and the visitors noted this with approval; it seemed to them a tribute to civilisation. The films gave a Royal progress through Whitehall, the University Boat Race, Epsom Downs on Derby Day, a students' rag in Trafalgar Square, a Labour meeting in Hyde Park, a boxing contest at the National Sporting Club. There were scenes from plays at West End theatres.

"Did you ever see 'The Admirable Crichton,' Mr. Thomson?" asked Mrs. Roller .

"I so rarely have a chance of going to places of entertainment," he answered.

" A pity!"

The wife of Thomson, a rather darkskinned young woman, brought a sheet of paper and begged that Mrs. Roller would furnish her with an autograph to be added to a somewhat limited collection, and, this obtained, handed the precious record at once to her husband, who guaranteed it would ever be looked upon with awe and reverence. In an interval he craved permission, as host, to tender an elementary form of refreshment manufactured under his guidance, highly esteemed by his fellowresidents, and kept for special occasions. The youngest girls of the small community brought trays holding small glasses of the beverage; one for each visitor. The girls curtsied very prettily as they tendered the drinks, and when one or two of Mrs. Roller's party indicated a reluctance to make an experiment, that lady issued a definite order. They were all, so soon as she gave the command, to imitate her example.

"Merey on us!" murmured Allinson.

"Another speech!"

Mrs. Roller, on this occasion, spoke briefly. She wished her friends to drink to the continued good health of the island. They were to remain but a day or two, but it was desired that the visit should be kept for ever in the memory of Mr. Thomson and his comrades. "I beg," said Mrs. Roller, "to propose the toast.

She emptied her small glass, and the rest followed her lead. They sank immediately to their chairs, and eyes closed. Thomson gave a few whispered instructions; the islanders crept away from the house. Half an hour later they were at the beach, rowing out to the Amorita in detachments. To the captain, Thomson presented the sheet of paper bearing Mrs. Roller's signature. Above

he had written these lines-

"Take these good people to England, and show them every attention on the voyage. Return for us when they have finished their

holiday in London."

The captain, in reading, nodded his head as one who discovers all his suspicions confirmed. "I knew she was a crank," he remarked, "and therefore I've trained myself to be prepared for anything." He ordered the chief engineer to see about getting steam up. The chief engineer

mentioned that they were in for some heavy bath. In discovering the first, they ascertained that all the huts were vacant; in weather. wading into the sea, they observed that the Amorita had gone. "Pretty state of affairs," complained one of the youths bitterly. "This means I shall get no football next season." "I'm already bored stiff with the whole lot," declared another, " and goodness knows what my opinion of you will be by the time we get away from this confounded place! "Question is," said a third, "when

"The inhabitants of the island, not yet recovered from their astonishment, and with their leader, Thomson, as middle man."

Mrs. Roller and her guests awoke on the following morning, shortly after sunrise, and the fact that everybody had a splitting headache made an inauspicious opening of the day. Furthermore, it proved alarming to find that the entire party—hitherto behaving with pronounced decorum—had slept heavily in one room; Mrs. Roller's earliest thought was that this would have to be kept out of the book. Allinson led the men away to search for water to drink, and water for a

will that be exactly? How long are we here for? Allinson, you ought to know."

"It looks," replied Allinson, with deliberation, "as though Mr. Thomson and his companions have somehow managed to get away in the yacht. They may have gone for a circular tour only; I can't say. But if they have no intention of coming back, then we shall undoubtedly have to stay on until the Admiralty cruiser makes its call in about six months' time." "Why—oh, why," they cried exasperatedly, "didn't you have the intelligence to bring along a wireless apparatus?"

"We must make the best of a bad job," said Allinson. "Let's decide to put a good face on it. We'll go now to the ladies, see about breakfast, and treat the whole affair as a remarkably good joke."

In the course of dull patches on the voyage out, when an air of melancholy pervaded

spirits, "is that I am blessed with a keen sense of humour." It appeared her stock had its limitations; the news brought by the gentlemen only sent her into lower depths of moodiness. On her daughter arguing that the disaster was one which could not have been prevented, Mrs. Roller took up definite ground. It could, she said, have been prevented, and Mr. Allinson should have prevented it. Mr. Allinson was altogether lacking in the qualities which went to make an efficient and reliable secretary. The one mistake had been in engaging Mr. Allinson in this capacity. Some of the men and girls returned at this



"'During the brief space, my good people, that we are with you, it is our earnest desire that you should be in no way impeded or checked by our presence. You will go on with your ordinary duties and occupations, and we shall do nothing more than take pictures of you at your work."

the yacht, Mrs. Roller had always taken on a manner of acute sprightliness, rallying her guests and stimulating them into animation. "What saves me," she confessed, answering inquiries concerning her good moment with coffee beans and a grinding machine, which they had found in one of the huts; Allinson carried a tray with articles of food. Mrs. Roller beckoned to him imperiously.

"I wish," she said, "to discharge you from my service."

"Right-o!" he commented.

"Bring my cheque-book, and I will pay

you your salary up to date."

"My good woman," he protested, "your cheque-book is on the yacht. And if you drew a cheque, no one could cash it. And if I had the cash, there's no opportunity of spending it."

Sides were at once taken. The Rollerites took the meal apart from the Allinsonites, with Miss Roller, as a kind of Jill-of-bothsides, going from one team to the other, and obviously perturbed by the differences that had arisen. A slight gain was effected by the secretary's group on the discovery that he had, by oversight, failed to hand over on the previous evening a large wooden box of tobacco, brought for presentation to the islanders. The young men of the company declared that, so long as Allinson held possession of this, Allinson was their leader, and they could follow no one else. Miss Roller, in her task as intermediary, conveyed a recommendation from her mother. It was that certain huts on the right should be occupied by the ladies; those on the left to be taken by the gentlemen. Agreed. Recommendation sent from the Allinson side that the ladies should at once set about any housework that seemed necessary. amendment was moved to the effect that the gentlemen ought to take a share, and Miss Roller was going to and fro, conducting the negotiations, when Allinson found in the pocket of his overcoat six tennis balls which he had thought of offering to the children of the island. Everyone—with the exception of Mrs. Roller, who said the moment had come when, in the interests of historical accuracy, it was desirable she should write up her diary-ran off to have a game of catch.

It was in pursuing this sport that headaches vanished and good temper returned; it was in playing that they surveyed a considerable part of the island, ascertaining that the crops were flourishing, and that a certain number of animals existed. It was in searching for a ball which had gone into some giant bracken that Allinson and Miss Roller found themselves alone.

"Arthur," said the girl, "I want you to

listen to me,"

"I can wish," he declared, "for no

pleasanter occupation."

"By the extraordinary circumstances which have happened, we are all likely to

remain here for some time. It is not surprising that we have started with a quarrel, but it would be deplorable if it continued. I want you to go now to my mother, tender her an apology——"

" Apology?"

"Well, an explanation."

"Explanation?" he echoed.

"I am sorry," she remarked, "if I can't find the exactly right word, but you know very well what I mean. The people who formerly lived here seem to have been on good terms; surely we, who pretend to be of a higher type of civilisation, can do the same."

"Your esteemed mater," he contended warmly, "has got, first of all, to recognise one simple and indisputable fact. It is that whereas on the Amorita there were grades of position, and she held the topmost place, here we are all equal. Money doesn't count for anything. Jewellery is of precious little use. The men and women who will gain the highest regard are the men and women who can help to produce food to be placed on the table."

"You somehow remind me," said Miss Roller, "of the Marble Arch corner of Hyde Park on a Sunday afternoon, only that you can't make your voice carry quite so far

as the orators do there."

"I," he declared, accepting her reproof submissively, "am reminded of an evening in Kensington Gardens—an evening when your powers of speech enabled you to say that you loved——"

"Kiss me," she ordered, "before any of

the others come along."

"This island of ours," he said, in complying readily, "is going to prove a most

excellent place for courtship."

They found, on returning to the huts, that Mrs. Roller was in tears, and Allinson gave her soothing words, declaring his willingness to do anything that was required to ensure comfort and serenity. He supplied—and the rest of the party confirmed his statements —an animated description of the island. By a lucky thought he said a word of blame in regard to the captain. The captain, agreed Mrs. Roller, had behaved in a manner altogether unworthy of the British mercantile navy. No excuse that might be offered subsequently would be looked upon as adequate. The only pleading on behalf of the captain was offered by the youngest girl of the party, who suggested he had perhaps, out of sheer good nature, taken the folk of the island for a day's cruise; by an oversight he had apparently omitted to secure the permission of the owner. The girl was begged to talk sensibly, or, in the alternative, to say nothing. Mrs. Roller had an idea the Board of Trade would deal suitably with the matter.

She was quite herself again when, fountain pen in hand, she drew up plans for the future. One by one the guests were bidden to approach, and the inquiries put elicited their qualifications. Duties were promptly assigned. A few of the young women had, during the War, occupied themselves on the land; nothing could be better. Mrs. Roller decided that health was the great detail to be cultivated during the lengthy stay; the enforced simplicity of living would be in favour of this. Allinson was to be responsible for the good conduct of the men; Miss Roller would see that the behaviour of the girls never went over the line fixed by the best authorities. For the rest, there could be perfect liberty, and if at any time disputes should arise—why, the arguments were to be submitted to Mrs. Roller, whose judgment was to be final. Over the door of the hut which she had chosen for herself-it happened to be the largest-Mrs. Roller ordered an inscription to be set.

"What cannot be cured," said the notice,

" must be endured."

The afternoon hours were devoted to domestic tasks in the huts and an investigation of the few treasures possessed by the islanders. At four o'clock the entire company was called by Mrs. Roller's whistle and ordered to sing. Between the items of the concert she made speeches, and one, in which she alluded to the perfect climate which they had the good fortune to enjoy, failed, she observed, to obtain approving ejaculations from the secretary.

"If Mr. Allinson," she announced, with spirit, "disagrees with the views I am putting forth, let him stand up and

sav so.'

"If I say anything," remarked the young man hesitatingly, "it will be only in the nature of a caution. I do not want expectations to be set too high."

"This is a serious matter," declared Mrs. Roller, with vehemence. "I take it you are charging me with being nothing more or less

than an optimist."

"The fact is," he explained, "I have been going through Thomson's hut, and I have come across his diary for last year. Here it is. Out of curiosity I glanced at the present date, and I find this."

The others, impressed by Allinson's deportment, crowded around to listen.

"' The torrential rains,' says Thom on in his diary, 'began to-day. We took the usual and necessary steps to render the huts secure, closing all windows, roofs, and openings. For three weeks, or perhaps longer, we shall not be able to venture out of doors.'" A united scream came from the listeners. "' Fortunately, I have a gramophone,' adds Thomson."

Allinson set the book down and faced the group. All were looking apprehensively at the clouds gathering in the sky. "I wish you to understand," he said firmly, "that our stay upon this island is not going to be altogether in the nature of a picnic."

"I must beg you," sobbed Mrs. Roller, finding her handkerchief, "to accept my resignation. I can no longer ask you to consider me as your president. I have come to an end of my resources. Elect someone in my place." Her daughter ran forward and

assisted her to go back to the hut.

There ensued a good deal of contentious argument, and a moving of resolutions, and a moving of amendments and appeals for order. Names were mentioned, and, on the protests of the owners of the names, withdrawn; the general anxiety seemed to be to escape responsibility. Whispered consultations took place, and then a young man rose.

"Beg to move that Mr. Allinson be

elected president." Loud applause.

"I accept office," announced the secretary, "on one condition. It is this. When, next year, we get back to England, I want to marry Ethel Roller." Sensation. "Go to Miss Roller's mother and obtain her consent to our marriage, and I will take the onerous duties offered to me. Fail in this, and I decline."

They were absent for a considerable space, and Allinson, tired of waiting, sauntered down to the beach. There he adjusted his field-glasses and gazed around; there was a faint hint of smoke in the distance, and he came away considerably heartened. Near the huts he was met by a serious-featured deputation. Mrs. Roller would give nothing but a vaguely worded promise. Allinson said at once that the guarantee must be clearly phrased, and, moreover, set down in writing. Unless this were supplied within the course of half an hour, then Mrs. Roller would find herself compelled to take charge again of the reins of government. Allinson went on to his hut in order to discover the box of fireworks.

In the brief dusk of the evening that came before nightfall, and as Allinson, on the beach, was counting his matches and preparing to start the illuminations that would attract the notice of the approaching steamer, the representatives, almost exhausted by their efforts in pleading, brought the document. As a reward, they were allowed to fire off some of the rockets. The others, at the earliest sound, rushed down, and hurrahs were given as an answer came. Mrs. Roller arrived with her daughter at the moment when a boat arrived with the captain for only passenger.

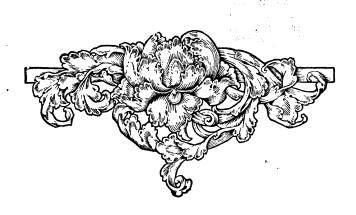
"A somewhat complicated business, ma'am," he said respectfully to Mrs. Roller, "but one not, I hope, altogether impossible of explanation. Orders bearing your signa-

ture were brought to me by Thomson. I acted upon them straight away. We hadn't been going more than six hours when him and his followers became afflicted by what I may venture to call mal de mer. They urged me to turn round and convey them back to the island. Thomson admitted the instructions had been obtained by subterfuge. They are now on board, extremely anxious to find themselves on terra firma and under cover before the annual rains begin. I shall be glad to receive your commands."

"Captain," said Mrs. Roller, stepping with alacrity into the boat, "don't be a

fool."

"I am always open," he said resignedly, to take a hint from a lady!"



THE ORCHARD.

N a warm haze the orchard trees abide,
That still in pendulous abundance hold
The russet and the rosy and the gold—
Flushed fruit in spent September glorified.
A late bee forays at the orchard side,
And dreams not yet of any coming cold,
And, heavy with a freight of leaves untold,
The dun stream chatters of the autumntide.

Young Spring let fall his mantle hereabout,
His cloak of primrose and of apple bloom,
Here in the orchard where the children shout,
And here for royal Summer Spring made room.
Now both are hence, and Autumn suns illume
The clustering apples, ripe at Summer's rout.

ERIC CHILMAN.

LOOSESTRIFE

By FRANK SWINNERTON

ILLUSTRATED BY BALLIOL SALMON

O arrive in England from Portugal, and to find that your sister is on her honeymoon, so that your telegram from abroad has never reached her, is a disagreeable enough experience. But Everard Fenton was a young man of exceptional philosophical power, and so he swallowed his disappointment and looked about him for other means of distraction. He had been five years away, his old friends no longer interested him, and his hotel was full of dull people of whom he wished to know nothing in the world. They were so dull that when he looked at the sides of their faces first to be seen from his lonely dining-table, he had absolutely no curiosity to learn what the sides not immediately visible looked like. At a single glance he came to the conclusion that there was not a man present whom he would have asked for a match, and not a woman with whom he would like to have even five minutes' conversation. He was not young enough to take what he could get, and be thankful for it, and not old . enough mumblingly to make the best of a bad job. He merely felt irritated and resentful. He was at that difficult agethirty-four-when one does not readily fall in love, and when one has hardly abandoned the notion that falling in love is a serious and delightful operation. He had come back to England for a holiday, with plenty of money and plenty of good spirits, and it needed a fair amount of his celebrated philosophic optimism to face the thought of a lonely month in this city of strangers and pale faces. Uncontrollably, he looked at his watch, as if in an impulse of desperation he already contemplated a precipitate return to Portugal. But only for a moment. It was then that his philosophy surged to the rescue.

Everard's work in Lisbon had to do with the immense amount of shipping which every day enters and withdraws from the Tagus. During his five years in Portugal he had set himself to learn the language and the resources of the country. He had thus

come to understand Portugal and the Portuguese as well as a foreigner with such opportunities could be expected to do, and he had forgotten a good deal of what he knew about the English. Although often tired of his work, and filled with a sort of homesickness, he had managed to retain his spirits, and he had learned how to be lonely without at the same time being miserable. Rather bored, he decided to go to the theatre. Two hours later, still more bored, he was having a whisky and soda in the Three hours after hotel smoking-room. dinner—at eleven o'clock—he was fast asleep in his bed, a sad but tranquil young man who found the lures of London no fresher than they had been on his original departure for Lisbon, but certainly less seductive. The theatre had been a failure. Even the stupidities of the Portuguese stage had not made him ready to leap at stupidities in another language. Quite a number of people would have imagined Everard to be tiresomely exacting in the matter of wit and sense, whereas his power to be pleased was only limited by a moderate self-respect. He had yawned in the theatre. It was Nature exerting herself at the expense of philosophy. What a thing it is for a philosopher to have a body which dictates to his judgment by means of yawns and physical inertia!

and physical inertia!

After a long night's rest, unbroken by dreams and the restlessness of a bad conscience, Everard felt decidedly better. He awoke with renewed zest for daily life. He slipped out of bed and looked out of the window. A brilliant August sun was betraying the grey hideousness of the pavements and the neighbouring houses. Men were going past the hotel, and blinds were being raised. Overhead a sky of dazzling blueness showed not a single cloud. If he could have seen a tree, Everard would have grinned for joy. But there were no trees, and there were no birds. A cat, which was having a morning bath and stopping to sneer at the passers, was the only creature in sight

which was not bent upon a toilsome and devitalising day. Everard's heart went out to the cat.

"You and I, old son," he said, addressing the cat, "are the only sane beings in this patch of misery." For a moment he looked at the cat, which was evidently wondering whether it was worth while to lick its chest once more. Then he looked doubtfully back towards the bed. What should he do ? How should be spend his hours? It would not suit his active disposition to remain contemplative, as the cat would certainly do. The question was, what direction should his activity take? It was eight o'clock and more, and the day, as far as he could remember, must be a Saturday. In that case these melancholy men who were walking past the hotel could not be going away from home for the whole day. They would return at lunch-time, would replace their office clothes, or working attire, by some other covering, and they would-just what would they do? Garden? Not in London. Play tennis? Very likely. That was no good to Everard, who belonged to no club. Play cricket, perhaps. Most probably they would go to sleep, and then, at night, to the theatre. He shuddered. Whatever happened, he would not again go to the theatre. He would-in point of fact, he could not think what to do. He sat on the edge of the bed in his Portuguese biscuit-coloured pyjamas with the turned-up trousers. His shapely feet disturbed the film of dust upon the rug at the bedside. Through his mind darted the thought "Bath." That was a good notion.

At this point the chambermaid thumped upon the door and left him a thimbleful of hot water, also his shoes. Everard brought these precious things into the room, and found his silken dressing-gown. He put on his slippers, collected his sponge and towel, and with ruffled hair went to find the bathroom. A whole string of extra charges faced him, but his philosophy was constant. He returned in ten minutes fresh and cheerful. The hot water was enough for shaving. At a quarter to nine he was eating fillets of haddock, which were described upon the menu as fillets of sole, and by a few minutes after the hour he was ready for anything. He then had an inspiration. He would go away for the week-end. No, he would do no such thing. Firmly his mind came back to this great problem. He would go away for the week-end. He would go to-he would go to --- He would go up the river!

Flannels, indiarubber-soled shoes of spotless buckskin, an extra coat. Mechanically he made a bagful of necessaries mechanically he told the girl at the desk in the entrance hall that he would be away until Monday, mechanically he made his way to Paddington. Long before ten o'clock he was sitting in a first-class railway carriage, and was soon travelling towards Pangbourne. No longer was there any need for philosophy. Philosophy, rather tired—because philosophy is not an attribute which believes in the strenuous life-had gone to sleep. Anticipation, a faculty which remains persistently unsophisticated and is always calling philosophy from bed by the most abject defeats, held the field. Everard in imagination saw the river swelling and glittering before him, and the deep shadows of rewarding trees; and he felt the thrilling joys of a moving boat, and the water's resistance, and the sun's warmth. He was happy. Portugal, even hotel, were forgotten. The river was calling. A beautiful day in the open air, and sweet rest at night in a riverside inn, lay in the near distance, a tempting and delightful prospect. How much more opened before him Everard did not so much as dream. He was content with the immediate good. It was enough.

II.

By two o'clock he had secured a room in a charming little hotel, clean and fresh, had enjoyed an extremely agreeable lunch, and had booked for the week-end exactly the lazy canoe he had most desired. It was small. and it was so light in the water that, out of practice though he was, Everard could make it move like down before the summer breeze. He was supremely happy. He could wish for nothing better. The river was still unencumbered with craft of any sort, and his wayward paddling was unseen and uncriticised. At last he felt that a month spent thus, in such fair weather, would be a sufficient joy to make the holiday an ecstatic memory. A month? A lifetime could be dreamed away in such a canoe. Everard rested lower in his place; smoke drifted from the bowl of his pipe; the sun shone and the leaves caught the rays as they fell; everywhere there was peace and shadow and brilliance. The beautiful slow rhythm of his stroke, and the deep silence, and all the drowsiness of the summer afternoon, sank into his heart. Everard felt his pipe slip. He recovered himself, paddled afresh, and sought the river's edge, beneath overhanging branches, softly hidden from the sun and the river passengers. Here, at full length, he lay in the moored canoe, forgetful of everything, baskingly content, as if he were in a sort of earthly paradise. He and his philosophy were equally the victims of the afternoon. Insects flew and hummed in the air, butterflies were astir, the water flowed, all unobserved. Everard was asleep.

This is an occurrence which needs no Men have explanation and no apology. fallen asleep in every situation. All Rome was asleep when the geese cackled and saved the city. Moreover, Everard was tired and happy. But incidentally his sleep that afternoon may have changed the course of his life. He awoke two hours later, and it was tea-time, and he ought, perhaps, to have paddled back to Pangbourne. Instead, he stretched himself, and grinned when he saw what the time was, and at last began lazily to paddle upstream in the penetrating heat of the late afternoon. His canoe answered to every stroke, darting through the water with the soft readiness of a fish. And Everard, his thoughts far away in Portugal, unconsciously quickened stroke, until, at the impulse of his active nature, he assumed the flashing dexterity of a racer. The banks of the river slipped past with extraordinary rapidity. Everard was laughing with a kind of glee. He was exulting in his own strength, his own And when he had sufficiently prowess. enjoyed the sense of power, he slackened; the paddle dipped gently; the canoe's pace dwindled. The thought of tea became suddenly fascinating. He approached the bank once more. It had become grassy and There appeared in the near free of trees. distance some respectable houses. came some clumps of trees, and more grass. And in the middle of one little glade Everard caught sight of a most romantic object. It was a girl's yellow sports coat. It lay gleaming in the sun, solitary, an unexpected brilliance.

"Ha! An event!" he ejaculated. "An episode!" He was filled with consternation. Anticipation grew suddenly alert. Philosophy slumbered. Everard stepped from his canoe and examined the garment. It was delightful. It was clearly, even to the eye of so elderly a man of thirty-four, the possession of an entirely charming person. And it was lost. It was miraculously lost, and Everard had found it. He was in a dilemma. Something that was neither philosophy nor anticipation made him cling to the sports

coat. Pinned to the breast of it was a small bunch of loosestrife. He could see loosestrife growing in profusion to the water's edge a little farther on, but the impulse to own this especial piece of that lovely adornment of the riverside made Everard detach the flower from the coat and pin it into his own buttonhole. He then folded the coat carefully and laid it in his canoe. It would be safe there, he pretended. It was only a pretence. He did not truly care about its That was an altogether minor matter. In reality, he was bent upon discovering the owner. To have done so he would impulsively have paddled the entire length of the River Thames. The sports coat had made him feel a little boy again. A little boy? Well, if not a little boy, perhaps a-perhaps quite a young man. How inexplicable are some of our most urgent intuitions!

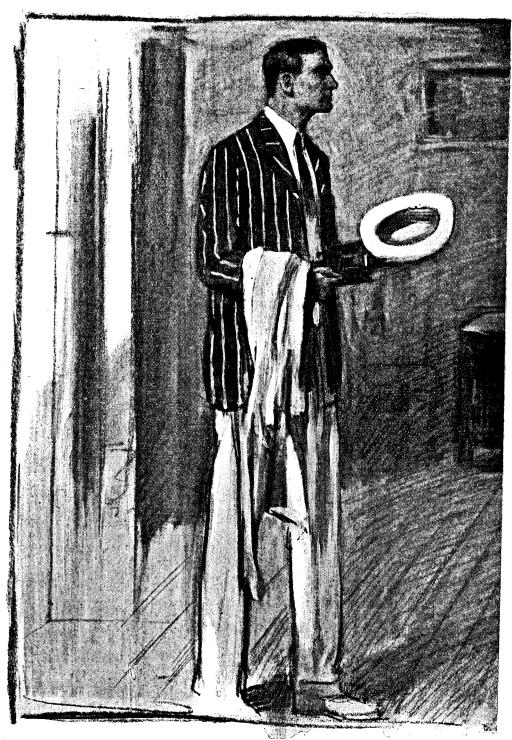
III

From that time onward the river was an amazingly romantic place. Everard's eager eves sought everywhere for a boat which might contain a girl able and willing to wear a dazzling yellow sports coat. He paddled fast and slow, his difficult scrutiny became once or twice almost noticeable, but nowhere did he discover a girl beautiful enough to own this most beautiful garment. In a moment of despair he almost came to the conclusion that the river was peopled with girls from his London hotel. All, he felt, were hideous in comparison with his visionary picture. And yet he could hardly bear to give up his quest. To have done so would have been to fly an unaccustomed white flag to misfortune. And yet Pangbourne came very near. Its houses, its general outlines as seen from the river, were abhorrent to him, but they could not be denied or evaded. Everard's spirits sank. Anticipation, side by side with Philosophy, fell Only Gloom kept its vigil. sports coat hung over Everard's arm He entered his inn with a sour face and a distracted manner.

And then came a marvel. For as he walked under the porch of the inn, and paused at the door of the breakfast-room, he saw the loveliest young girl he had ever seen, and he heard her say exultingly:

"Oh-oh-my coat!"

Everard turned, to meet the gaze of three persons—that of the girl who had spoken and her two rather older companions (one of them a man). He mutely held out the



"Everard turned, to meet the gaze of three persons."

coat, and, following the direction of the girl's eyes, looked slowly in the direction of his own buttonhole. Then his eyes went back to the girl. She was very young and

fair and unaffected, and in her cheeks there was a delicious bloom of health and gaiety. She was, perhaps, nineteen or twenty, and she was looking at his stolen loosestrife



"He heard her say exultingly: 'Oh-oh-my coat!'"

with such roguish recognition that Everard suddenly felt the blood creeping under his skin. It was delightful, of course, but he could have wished, at this moment, that the impulse which had led to the appropriation of the flowers had been resisted. Then his mood changed as quickly, and he held out

the coat with a very simple gesture that carried its own reassurance to the girl's friends.

"I found it on the grass," he said. "I've been searching for the owner. I'm so glad to have found her."

And, with that, Everard bowed to the

three people and went off to wash, and found himself whistling all the time, as if he were tremendously happy. Yet Anticipation was fast asleep, in a sort of drugged and bewildered slumber, because Everard had been taken unawares, and had no thought but one of pleasure in the delightful moment.

IV.

AT the evening meal he found himself alone in the same room with the other visitors, for the inn was a small one, and its accommodation, though limited, was as yet unstrained. The three nodded to him, and the man came across to his table. He was a tall, rather dark man, and his smile was awkward, but sincere.

"I say," he said, "we didn't thank you for bringing that coat. We hadn't missed

it. Jolly kind of you.'

"Very lucky," grumbled Everard, with downcast eyes, "to have been able to hand it back."

"All right," said the other man, who You staying here long?"

"I don't long." understood

"I don't know. I'm just back from Portugal, on holiday, and I couldn't stand London.'

"Beastly hole, isn't it? Well, we shall

see you again."

He withdrew, and Everard, while munching, steadfastly avoided looking at the girl, and stared at the opposite wall, thinking of her all the time. After all, this was the nearest approach to excitement that he had had since his arrival in England, so who could blame him for being unusually selfconscious? He was only human. He began to wonder who the girl was, and who the other people were, and if the man were her lover or her brother, or the other girl her sister or a friend. Somehow he hoped strangely enough, he hoped the man was not her lover.

Presently the others went out, and Everard finished his meal in silence. was so little of an adventurer that he neither tried to fall in with them again that night nor tried to learn their names. It did not occur to him to do so. For Everard, with all his faults, was a gentleman. He smoked a pipe, and then he went for a walk. By the time he returned to the inn the three other visitors were in bed. It was then that the thought occurred to Everard: "Perhaps they all go home on Monday, and I shall never see her-them-again." He had some ado to awaken Philosophy, but at last fell asleep in tolerable comfort.

In the morning Everard was down early, and stumbled across the other man just outside the porch The sun was very vigorous, and the prospect of a cloudless day was unquestioned. The two men fell into conversation, exchanged names, information, liking. It seemed, to Everard's relief, that the girl-by name Frances-was the sister of the other girl, and sister-in-law to his interlocutor. The man was Sidney Tenterden. The party was at the inn for ten days or more. To Everard the news was extra-He could hardly. ordinarily delightful. restrain expression of his joy, particularly when Tenterden said: "I say, I hope you'll stay on here. It's an awfully jolly place." "Awfully jolly!" It was Paradise!

By the end of that day Everard was definitely of their party. The idea of going back to London would have shocked him to the heart.

V.

When you have been all day and every day for a fortnight, often alone, in the company of one person, you feel that you know that person thoroughly. Everard was so certain of his understanding of Frances that he could have imagined nothing more pleasant, more entrancingly happy, than the enjoyment of her society during the remainder of his life. He was past the intoxications of youth, but he loved her with all the strength of his manhood. She was small and fair, as graceful as a young animal, every movement of which is an unstudied appeal to the eye, and she had such delicacy, such delicious roguishness, that he was all the time delighted afresh. There was no end to her charm. And yet there was a barrier between them. It was the barrier of fifteen years. He was a man, and she was still a little girl, so unconscious of her enchanting youth that she had no impulse to exploit it. In vain did Everard believe the return of his love to be her true fulfilment. He was aware of all that the difference in their ages signified. It meant that he would be middle-aged while she was yet a young woman. meant that, even if he captured her fancy now, he could hardly hope at this stage to win her heart for ever. For that she must have suffered, and must have sought in vain the meaning of all her own multifarious inclinations. It was a bitter knowledgenot an admitted grief, or a recognised final " No," but the trouble that lay ever behind his love and his definite resolve to attain his own happiness through her responsive love.

Towards the end of the holiday he often watched her eagerly, wondering and hoping-Philosophy and Anticipation alike banished-scanning her face, conning her every slight change of manner and expression in the quick desire for any sign that should allay his fears. Frances gave no such sign. She enjoyed his company, responded to his whim, his leadership, and yet remained continuously her own, herself. He was her friend, about whom she had no least thought of sacrifice or unhappiness. She at least betrayed no doubt. Her serenity was like a knell in his heart. They spoke of his return to Portugal, and she was troubled, as one would be always at the prospective loss of a pleasant companion. No more. She was a girl, past the first age of sentimentality, but not yet the woman desiring a comrade through life. Frances was what is called heart-whole. She was not in love

Even on the last day, when they were alone together, she gave no hint that her regret was anything but a frank disappoint-

ment at the inevitable parting.
"Oh, it's too bad!" she exclained. "It's been such a happy time. And you have been so tremendously kind. . . . "

Everard longed for banished Kind!

Philosophy.

"We've been happy," he agreed. "Everything's been so lovely."

There was a long silence. The paddle dipped lazily. The sun made the water sparkle. They were idling along a backwater, alone and self-engrossed. Everard hardly noticed a brilliant kingfisher take hurried flight many yards ahead. It was only a flash, and succeeding stillness. All was undisturbed except his heart. They did not speak for a little. Then Frances, lying there with her face hidden, idly dipping a hand into the water, asked another question.

"When will you come back?" she asked. "Not for a year, I'm afraid," he told

It was a shock.

"A year. How dreadful! Not before?"

"You'll miss me?"

"Of course," she said frankly. can't believe - that you've been here so short a time—that—well, that you're going."

" Ïdon't want to go!" cried poor Everard.

"Look here, Frances, I've got to go. My work lies away. But I'm going to try and get work in England. You'd like that? Well, there's another thing. You see, I can't help it, but—the fact is, I've—I want to marry you!"

"Öh, Everard!" She sat up in the canoe, making it rock. Then her head shook involuntarily. He was quick to notice.

"No, no! I know. You don't think like

that."

She was suddenly awake, her impetuous mind accepting the fact of his lovenot as a tribute to her own charm, but as a cause of pain to him. She did not hint triumph, but was frankly sorry, and full of annoyance that her own heart was unmoved. Everard was prouder of her natural attitude than he could have

"I'm afraid I don't," said Frances at last. "Why don't I? I wish I did. Oh,

I wish I did! Poor Everard!"

"I knew you didn't. You see, I don't ask you to marry me. It wouldn't be fair. I didn't, as a matter of fact, mean to speak of it. . . ."

She turned and held his hand very tightly. "Horrid of me," she sighed, her voice caressing. Then, with tears in it, she added in self-reproach: "Beastly!"

"No," said Everard. "I'm sorry I can't be heroic, my dear. I think it's very natural. But there's just this. You may-well, you may feel differently. I'm too old to change -I think. If you suddenly-you might, you know-if you suddenly felt you-sort of--wanted me, you could tell me. Would you mind that?"

Frances drew a deep breath. Then she gave a little laugh, like the laugh of a child that has been crying, so full was it of quick

"Mind!" she exclaimed. "You're so nice. I feel as if I'd known you alwaysalways. There isn't a thing I feel that you don't understand, and I'm so. . . . Everard, I'll promise. . . . I'm not really selfish or stupid."

'My dear!" he protested.

They said nothing more, but sat hand in hand. And then, becoming aware of their attitude, Frances gently withdrew her hand.

"And that's that," she ventured, but soberly, ruefully.

" A bargain ? "

"A bargain."

He did not see her again before leaving for Portugal. His long Calvary began.

VI.

For Frances the winter was one succession of gaieties. She was young, she was very pretty, she loved dancing and pleasure. Young men from all parts of the world seemed bent upon adoring her. They brought chocolates and flowers, danced with her, took her to theatres, flirted—or tried to flirt--drank wine with her, showed her all the more sparkling facets of the life of pleasure. In vain did her sister frown and her mother despond; the fact that Frances was a belle made all she did pardonable and natural. But in the wake of such a run of festivities came one sad fact-Frances forgot Everard. She forgot him because her vanity was roused by all the homage she received. She did not think that it was all, in the end, meaningless. Why should she have done so? She was newly released from tutelage, full of high spirits and desire for happiness. And she fell in love-not much, but enough to make her feel sad and exalted and nonsensical twenty times a day. The young man was a slim and graceful young fellow of five-and-twenty, with very white teeth and very dark eyes, and he was just the man to attract her eager heart, bent upon making beauty out of all the superficial charms. The young man was a flirt, an experienced flirt, and he awoke Frances to the delights of cajolery and mystification. She was happy, thoughtlessly intoxicated by her power and her own uncertainties. At his withdrawal she was hurt, wretched, broken-hearted. Then she found that her broken heart was in perfectly good repair, and in a month was making fun of the young man for whose love she had lately been dying. It was all part of her education, and she grew rapidly. Strangely enough, this single experience was like an inoculation, for she was henceforth not in love. Love she drew from many, and she was in danger of being spoilt by the consequences of her at first unconscious charm, but she never again felt more than a momentary attraction to any of the young men who surrounded her. Gradually she tired of them all. Gradually they one by one became insipid to her, with their silly talk of trivial things, their easy slang, their aimless cameraderie. She began to long for something less stupid, something upon which she could rely for support, and upon which she could feed her growing understanding. Long, long ago, she one day felt, she had known a real man, a man whom she had liked and respected, whom she could have

continued all her life to like and respect; and so she began slowly to remember a summer fortnight upon the river, when the hot days had passed in a dream, when the sun had been continuously gracious, when life had seemed to her far sweeter and cleaner than anything she had since known. She suddenly remembered Everard. Her heart warmed at thought of him. The revellers she had since known became pigmies. And yet she was not in love, but only curious. She wondered what he was like, what he was feeling, thinking. Her wonderings were sweet; still very detached and care-free and hesitating.

The months went by, and there came no word from Everard, and she did not write to him; but, instead, Frances continued her tourney with gaiety. She was now thinking of the summer, though it was still spring, and some of her new friends were making plans for the summer. The river was their goal, as it had been hers. And then brighter days came, and the long clear hours of brilliant sunshine. The river was again at its best. Slowly Frances's heart expanded. She became one of a party that gathered at a riverside house. The days were spent in or upon the river, the evenings in dancing, the short nights in dreamless Days passed. The delights palled; one by one she came to know her friends too well, so that in her heart there was a vague dissatisfaction, a dim sense that by some strange comparison they all alike were unsatisfying to the best impulses that stirred her. One morning Frances awoke very early. She was alone, first that day upon the river, rowing herself, full of eager revelling in the solitude. And as she rowed in the long morning shadows she suddenly caught sight of something that made her heart stop beating. It was an open glade upon the river's bank, and beyond it, growing to the water's edge, was a glorious patch of purple loosestrife. As though some extraordinarily vivid memory had overpowered her, she saw again a yellow sports jacket, a buttonhole of loosestrife, the face of Everard. Her heart beat faster and faster. Colour flooded her cheeks. Her eyes closed. An overwhelming longing possessed her.

VII.

EVERARD sat in the room of his flat which overlooked the Tagus. He was high above the river, and could see the ships lying at the quays or moored in mid-stream. The

early sun glittered on the river and gilded the green highlands upon the south banks. It gave warmth and tone to the pale pink and yellow and blue walls of the houses near him. The town was already baked in heat, torrid at this early hour of the day, and threatening to be unbearable in the afternoon. Immediately beneath were the precipitous streets leading down to the river. Breakfast lay before Everard, and he was alone, the scent of coffee in his nostrils. But he was neither eating nor drinking. He was listening to the voice of Philosophy, who was rather prosy this morning, and Everard's impatient ejaculations were evidently disturbing the continuousness of Philosophy's studied remarks. There was no sympathy between them, but Philosophy was Everard's sole companion. Anticipation lay dying, so near his end that he hardly seemed still to exist. The sun was so hot that, in spite of outside blinds and wideopen windows, the air of the room was heavy with its burden. Everard's thoughts strayed so wilfully that Philosophy's voice became as the droning of a distasteful blue-He no longer listened. He was thinking of those days of nearly a year ago, when the sun's heat was part of the full joy of the summer days. And his heart was heavy. In a few hours he would start again for England; but he had no longer any relish for the journey, for he had received no word from Frances, and had no hope that she still remembered him. Displacing Philosophy, thrusting aside even Gloom, came haggard Despair. Despair said "Better abandon hope. She's young; she's forgotten those days; she's forgotten you. Why go to England at all? It will only make things worse. Stay here. Make up your mind to an empty Never go home. It would only be life. a useless pain."

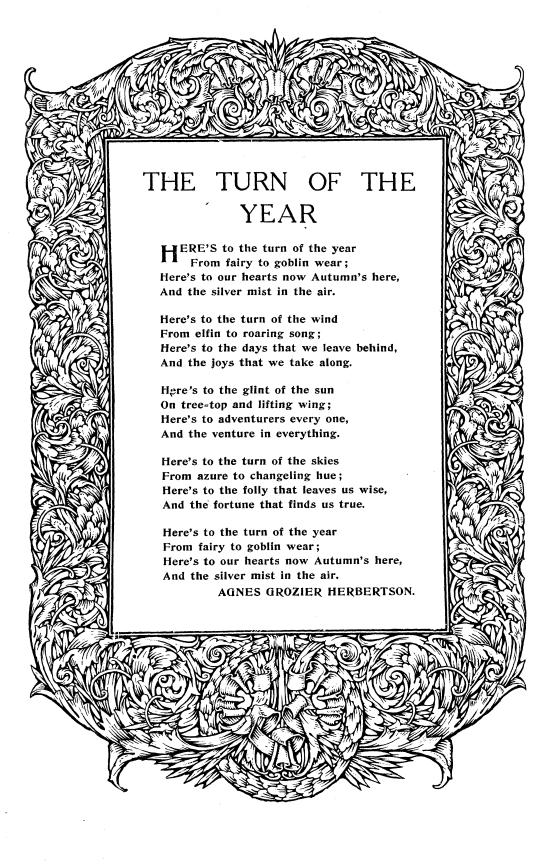
With a groan, Everard raised his hands to his head and leant miserably upon his elbows. Despair had mastered him. He was helpless. He was so absorbed in his fatalistic misery that he did not hear the door open, and, until it was before him, did not see the letter which had been brought. Even when he knew it to be there, he did not at first feel any stir of curiosity at the English stamp or the unfamiliar handwriting. Then he opened the envelope. A single sheet of paper lay within, enclosing a sprig of loosestrife! The paper bore, stamped with a die, only the address

"Riverside, Goring on Thames" There was no writing upon it.

Nevertheless, Everard rose suddenly to his feet, transfigured.

VIII.

In three days he was in London. He reached London in the evening, and travelled the same night to Goring-on-Thames. It was one of those beautiful nights when the moon has blanched everything that lies stilly beneath its exquisite radiance. And Everard went straight to the river, which was like silver with strange patternings of mysterious black. It was not yet ten o'clock, and at Riverside, a big house, the lawns of which ran down to the water, they were untired of the day. Music was being played within doors, and he could see girls and men strolling upon the lawns and among the trees. He could tell that the party was a large one. His heart sank. Had the sprig of loosestrife been only a slight reminder, carelessly sent? Should he find Frances unthinkingly one of these gay people, really forgetful of him, sporting with his love? For a moment Everard paused. He had a traitorous vision of Frances as a coquette, cruelly cold to the message he might read into her gift. Where the thought came from nobody ever knew. It faded in the flame of his self-reproach. Then, pushing aside the branches that stood in his way, he stepped forward. For he had seen a figure he knew, and he was unconsciously smiling, although his eyes were stern and anxious. It was Frances, the same slim Frances of the happy days, but with more assurance in her bearing, as if she were now indeed fully grown and confident He could only realise that, and her grace and fresh beauty. For the rest, he was held there by fear, and love. and delight, which fought together in his Slowly, slowly the figure came towards him, as yet unaware of his presence. As she approached in the moonlight, Everard glanced down at his buttonhole, adorned with a sprig of faded loosestrife. Then he waited. When Frances saw him she gave no sign of surprise or hesitation or timidity, but came onwards, her lips parted and her eyes wide open, as one who no longer dreams, who no longer is in doubt of her true love. The beautiful candour of her expression was his reassurance and his reward. No need further to doubt or to question. Thus do journeys end in lovers' meeting.





THE MEKONG-SALWEEN DIVIDE, THE BARRIER RANGES OF TIBET, 15,000 FEET ABOVE THE SEA IN FORE-GROUND, 20,000 FEET IN THE DISTANCE.

LIFE IN EASTERN TIBET

ITS ANCIENT MONASTERIES AND OTHER FEATURES OF A REMOTE CIVILISATION

By CAPTAIN F. KINGDON WARD, F.R.G.S.

NCE again the curtain which for so long has been drawn across Tibet is being furtively pulled aside, letting in upon the grey civilisation of the lamas the light of the West. It has been done many times before, yet always the Western world, after a breathless glimpse, has watched the mysterious land behind the Himalayas relapse into a darkness more Cimmerian, a secrecy more profound. Why is this? How is it that for so many centuries Tibet has successfully maintained the fight against the ravenous curiosity of the West? The answer is simple and consists in the two words geographical seclusion.

No country in the world is so effectively isolated, so bristling with natural defences. To the south the mighty snow-clad Himalayas, range on range, bar the way from India. To the west the Pamirs and other formidable mountains divide Tibet, not, indeed, from

fertile plains and teeming cities, but from the deserts of Central Asia. To the north leagues of frozen tundra separate habitable Tibet from the barren sands of Turkestan, and, finally, to the east lies such a tangle of mountain chains, intersected by deep gorges, that the traveller wishing to penetrate Tibet from China may well stand aghast at the prospect as he gazes across the triple-barred ranges. So remote is Tibet, indeed, that long before those at home have time to peep behind the scenes, the curtain, even when momentarily pulled aside, has again been drawn. Few Englishmen have time to overcome the physical barriers and look into Tibet for themselves.

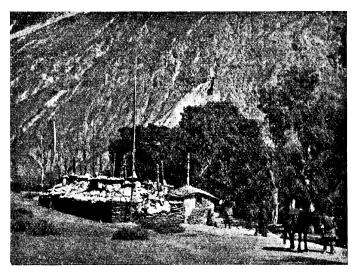
Nevertheless, the seeds of Anglo-Tibetan friendship, so skilfully planted by the British Mission in 1904, have borne good fruit; and when, a few years later, the Dalai Lama sought refuge in India from the harsh

onslaughts of the Chinese cavalry, that fruit ripened. Indeed, in 1914 the Dalai Lama offered the Indian Government a Tibetan contingent; and the sons of highborn Tibetan officials have been educated in England, have acquitted themselves well, and will carry back with them to Tibet the new wine of Western civilisation.

Naturally it is of the utmost importance to our Empire in India that we should be, not only on good terms with Tibet, but that the relations between China and Tibet should be clearly defined.

and, further, that our own relations with China, who, equally with ourselves, are neighbours of Tibet, should be amicable. Hostility between China and Tibet cannot but affect us in India.

This triangular relationship is in itself a delicate matter, for it is not easy to allay the natural suspicions of each with regard to the intention of the others. How much more difficult was it a few years since, when the advance of Russia in Central Asia during the 'seventies had unexpectedly brought that Power to the very threshold of Tibet on the

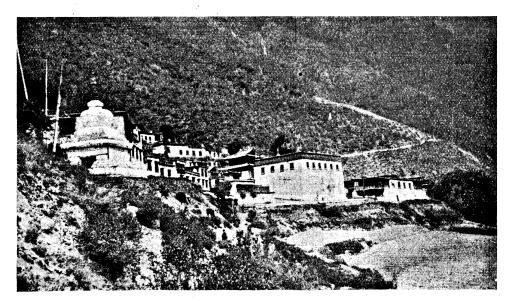


MANI PYRAMIDS: WAYSIDE PILES OF INSCRIBED STONES.

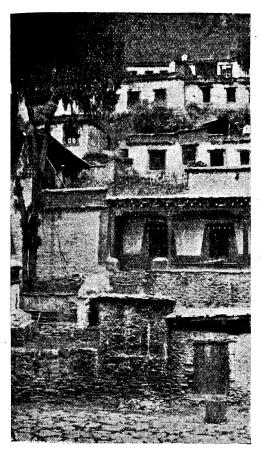
north-west! Then the problem was well-nigh insoluble, save by closing Tibet politically, thus aiding Nature.

With the elimination of Russia as a factor to be reckoned with in this connection, the problem is relieved, though by no means solved. No doubt China has paramount interests in Tibet, though her claim is based on traditional and historical grounds rather than on racial and religious ties.

But the ties with India, whence Tibet drew the inspiration for her religion (even as China did), her art, her literature—nay, the



THE MONASTERY AT MEN-KONG, SOUTH-EASTERN TIBET.



PRIESTS' HOUSES AT MEN-KONG MONASTERY.

very foundations of her civilisation, the alphabet itself—are closer still, and it is from India, not from China, that Tibet will

acquire her Western learning.

Indeed, the geographical position of India makes it certain that it is towards the south rather than towards the east that Tibet must look for her future trade. The position of Great Britain in India, therefore, makes it imperative that a loyal understanding with both Tibet and China be arrived at. undoubtedly looks to this country to help her to combat the designs, not of a responsible Government in Peking (should there ever be one), but of provincial Governments in Western China, who undertake periodic military adventures into Tibet. There is no reason why a satisfactory solution should not be found, whereby the interests of Great Britain may be safeguarded. the amour propre of China satisfied, and the complete independence of Tibet guaranteed.

Geographically Tibet is divided into two

very distinct parts—the high plateau occupying the north and centre, and the river gorge region occupying the south and east, where the great bulk of the population is concentrated; and if we approach the country from China, it is through that narrow river gateway by the defile which leads from the teeming south to the cold plateau behind the Himalayas that we must seek our way.

The steamy forests of the Irrawaddy, with their peacocks and monkeys, their tiger and sambur, are soon left behind. No more do we hear the silvery notes of the Burmese gong ringing through the jungle; now the pack-mules which carry our baggage face the steep mountain ridges of Yunnan—" Land of the Southern Cloud "—and the raucous voice of the muleteer echoes from cliff to cliff.

One morning my Chinese boy-Kin-téh,



CLIFF PATH IN THE MEKONG GORGE.

"Golden Virtue," is his name—comes to me weeping. "Sir," says he, "I wish to return to Burma."

"Why, what is the matter? I thought you would come with me for a year?"

"I am afraid, sir!" And he hangs his head.

"Afraid! Afraid of what?" This was surely beyond reason. Why, we were in the fellow's own

country!

"To-morrow they say we go down to the Lu river. It is very dangerous to cross the Lu valley—all men know that. Do not the five coloured mists hover over the Lu valley, and the fearful blanket fish lurk in its waters, dragging men down? I cannot go, sir. I shall surely die. I have a wife in Burma!"

"Well, but, Kin-têh, you

my "boy," who was but a child; they had been teasing him, they said. And Kin-téh plucked up heart, so that he turned not back, but crossed the river by the swinging chain suspension bridge, and continued with us



NATIVE TYPES OF SOUTH-EASTERN TIBET.



TIBETAN MINSTRELS PERFORMING ON THE ROOF OF THE AUTHOR'S HOUSE.

have a wife in Tali, too! As for your five mists, they are only seen during the eighth month, when the rain comes; there is no danger now. The blanket fish shall not hurt you; everyone has heard of it, but no one has ever seen it. Do not be afraid." Thus I tried to comfort him.

Then came the muleteers and laughed at

into the mountains. Day after day we marched over rivers and mountains, and at last we reached the city called Tali, by the blue lake, then turned northwards till the snowy ranges of Tibet rose along the horizon.

Now we crossed "The River of Golden Sand" in large flat-bottomed scows, the mules jammed like sardines, and climbed up through gloomy forests till the icy blasts off the snow peaks buffeted us

rudely. And one day, after we had crossed a pass where the rhododendron bushes blazed like whin on a Scotch moor, we tramped down a valley which suddenly opened out on to an emerald-green plain. Herds of shaggy yak grazed by the chattering river, and hard by a high-walled house fluttered a few flags. A column of fragrant smoke rose from a pyre



CHINESE AND TIBETAN BOYS IN THEIR BEST CLOTHES.

on the roof straight into the turquoise sky. We were in Tibet.

A man appeared in the doorway, a tall, bronze-faced figure, dressed in a long white dressing-gown, his black pigtail tied round his head.

"Kale, kale, shog, oh!" said he, putting out his tongue, as all polite Tibetans do when they greet strangers. "Enter, Bimbo! Ride in and seat yourself, please!"

Nothing loth, we entered into darkness, and found ourselves in the stable, which occupied the ground floor. A huge rugheaded dog sprang viciously at us, and the house resounded to his deep baying. The

chain pulled him up with a jerk, and Dawa Tsering flung down a hempen blanket. Immediately the dog turned his attention to that, searching out the vermin, and we slipped past.

We followed our host up a notched log which, projecting through a square hole in the floor above, did duty for a ladder, finding ourselves on a narrow verandah from which doors opened on every side.

"Welcome, Bimbo!" The big men rose as we entered the room, put out their tongues in friendly greeting, and spread out their hands; then they sank down again in a half ring, their long cloaks flowing about them.



A SKIN CORACLE ON THE KIN-SHA OR YANGTZE.

Now a woman set about preparing tea. On the open hearth a log fire blazed, filling the dim room with acrid smoke; a row of tall, brass-bound wooden cylinders stood to Tea was crumbled in sufficient quantity from a coarse brick, and a slice of fresh butter, cut from a lump which was carefully wrapped in green leaves, added, the whole being placed in a wicker funnel. This was next placed in the mouth of a cylinder, and boiling water, ladled from a big iron pot, poured through. The butter, melting, passed through with the tea, and when the cylinder was half full, the strainer was removed. Finally a pinch of earthy salt was thrown in, and the nauseous mixture

stamped up and down in the churn with a perforated cylinder till it frothed. When the butter was thoroughly emulsified, Dawa Tsering drew from within the folds of his ample cloak a round wooden cup and, having polished the inside with his sleeve, handed it to the woman. "Drink, Bimbo," said she, setting beside me the bowl of frothing, clay-coloured liquid. It would have been churlish to refuse such

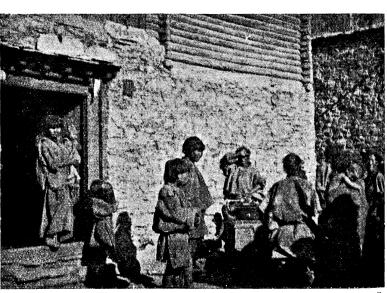
hospitality, but I had poor stomach for the salt suds.

Tea was now served out all round, and at the same time there appeared skin bags filled with parched barley flour, which was crammed into the mouth by handfuls, or mixed with tea into a bolus. After the frugal meal the Tibetans licked their bowls clean and hid them once more within their bosoms.

Meanwhile a bare room had been swept and garnished for me. It was very dark, for the only window was a small square hole in the thick wall, with stout wooden cross-bars, on a level with the floor. So I climbed up through a square hole to the next roof terrace, where stood an open shed, and there took up my quarters. A low parapet surrounded the flat roof, and in one corner stood a small incense furnace, like a chimney-pot;

from the smouldering juniper wood rose a column of smoke.

From my airy shelter on the roof I could hear the monotonous drone of a sorcerer in the house of a sick Tibetan opposite. All through the night he squatted in the doorway mumbling prayers, calling the attention of the gods by ringing a hand-bell, and from time to time banging a drum. With the cold dawn the evil spirit must have departed, for the sorcerer slept behind his curtain, and next day the Tibetan was well again. They are good fellows, these Khampa, as the men of Eastern Tibet call themselves, and splendid specimens physically. Tall, deep-chested, with powerful shoulders, they stride up and



THE GRAMOPHONE IN TIBET: NATIVES ENJOYING THE STRAINS OF "HITCHY KOO."

down the mountains carrying their heavy loads, a contrast to the short men of Lhasa or the nomads of the plateau. Indeed, there are almost as many types in Tibet as in China or India; we need only to consider the Tanguts of the Koko Nor, the Ladakis, the men of Lhasa, the Khampa, and the Tibetans of the tropic provinces along the Brahmaputra, to realise that this is so. Yet are they bound together by a religion whose magnetic ritual radiates lines of force halfway across Asia, drawing men from the remotest corners unerringly towards Lhasa, which has imposed upon them a common religion and almost a common language.

"Good day to you, Bimbo," says the wayfarer you meet on the road, driving his laden donkeys before him. "Where are you going?" And at parting: "Please ride

carefully!" Thus the Khampa, ever polite and hospitable to strangers. Only beggars walk in Tibet, and your host, on inviting you to his house, will say: "Please ride in." Tea will be served immediately, with such luxuries as parched green rice, dried honey, and fiery Chinese spirit. There will be fresh butter, too, and rich yak's milk, hard twists of bread fried in oil, and maize cakes. Good fare this. Nor is there lack of eggs, goat's flesh, or fowls. No one need starve in Eastern Tibet.

True, the butter may be full of hair (it has been made in primitive fashion by beating milk in a skin bag); the milk may be sour (it has been drawn into a wooden bucket which has never in the course of its long existence been scoured out), but what of that? We are hungry, and do justice to

the kindness of our hosts.

Often, when climbing on the high ranges, I would drop down into a little emerald-green dell where the grass lapped round a tiny turquoise lake set in a grey ring sixteen thousand feet above the sea, and find here the black cloth tent of some lonely herdsman. Then the cliffs would resound to the baleful greeting of great watch-dogs, and the Tibetans would come with their tongues out, and invite us into their poor shelter and give us of the best. Far above our heads the slope would be speckled with yak, and when night came on they would be brought down and tethered in rows, guarded from prowling leopards by fierce dogs. From our tent we would listen to the clanging of the iron bells as the restless cattle moved, and the deep woof! woof! of the dogs if we dared to make a sound ourselves.

To the village where we live come a party of strolling players. The people throng the tortuous alleys, wending their way to the mule serai where the caravan camp. Here the minstrels will perform. The man wears over his chupa an apron of bells, which tinkle as he dances to a squeaky air he plays on his fiddle; it is but yak hair stretched across snake-skin, and weird are the notes! His fair companion sings in a blood-curdling falsetto; her freshly-buttered hair is glossy as silk in the sunshine. There is a jester, too. He tells stories, hoary jests which perhaps delighted Alexander's camp followers two thousand years ago, and the crowd roars.

Next day a procession of pilgrims tramp through the village. They carry their packs on their backs and long staves in their hands. Some have little prayer-drums, which they twirl as they march, thereby acquiring great

Everywhere the common people greet us as friends; it is only the lamas standing outside their grim-looking monasteries who scowl at us sometimes. Even they are rarely hostile. And as we sit round the fire in the violet dusk of the forest, when the stars are just peering above the tops of the mountains, listening to the mournful notes of a whistle and the twang of a jews' harp, we feel that the solitude of Tibet is a gift of the gods.

TIME.

A WEEK? A month? A day?
We met, how long ago?
I take no count of Time,
This only do I know:

Each hour, each stolen hour,
I spend beside my dear,
Seems but a moment's flash;
Each hour apart, a year.

BRIAN HILL.

KITTY DOES THE TALKING

By H. E. MARSHALL

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

"T'S silly of a man to give way like that," said Sally Howard, in her cool, level voice. "Don't you think so?"

Neither of the handsome, smartly-dressed women to whom she spoke replied. There were tears in Lady Guildford's kind blue eyes, and her lips trembled. She was evidently very much upset by Sally's news, and made no effort to hide her feelings, but the face of her young sister Kitty was inscrutable. It told Sally nothing, and she wanted to know badly how her cousin was taking the thing. She wished Kitty would speak, and not sit there like some dumb idol, clothed in an immensely smart Parisian gown

For a full minute the heavy silence lasted. The two sisters sat very still, each lost in her own thoughts. Only Sally moved restlessly about the room. The silence seemed

intolerable to her. Talk she must.

of the latest shade of blue.

"It was a stupid accident, anyhow," she burst out at last. "If it had happened in the War, of course he would have been a hero. It's simply stupid of him now. Why can't a writer stick to his writing, and not go dabbling in things he doesn't know anything about? If he had been doing anything useful, it wouldn't have been so bad. But just trying to invent some new fireworks to amuse a lot of dirty East End kids! And now he has gone and blinded himself! He might have known something of the sort would happen one day."

Kitty looked at her cousin with a sort of cold wonder, but still she did not speak.

"Anyhow, I think the way he is taking it is cowardly and—weak," continued Sally somewhat defiantly.

"My dear, I don't think you know how

heartless you sound," said Lady Guildford, gently—she was always gentle.

"Oh, well, Georgie, you know it isn't even as if he were a bit disfigured, or anything like that. You'd never know, to look at him, that there was anything the matter."

"Sally," said Lady Guildford, with all the sharpness of which she was capable, "don't talk like that. It's simply awful. If he'd taken it well, he'd have been an angel. As it is, he's just a poor lonesome man in outer darkness. I must go to see him." And she rose as if she meant to carry out her intention at once.

"I wouldn't if I were you," drawled Sally, in her calm, hard voice. "He isn't fit for anyone to see. I'd wait a bit till he

recovers himself a little."

"But you see him," said Kitty sharply. Thank goodness, the dumbidol had spoken at last! Yet now Sally wasn't sure that she didn't prefer her silence. There was some-

thing so cutting in Kitty's voice.

"I?" she stammered. "Oh, dear nonot since it all happened. It was Gilbert
who told me—he's been, of course. By the
bye," she went on hurriedly, "Gilbert
wanted to come with me this morninghe's been as gloomy as I don't know what
ever since you went away—but I wouldn't
let him. I told him that we were going to
talk frocks, and that I was going to see
all the things you'd brought from Paris,
so we really couldn't be bothered with
him. So—"

"What did he say about Martin?" demanded Kitty, cutting sharply across

Sally's chatter.

Sally shrugged her shoulders impatiently. Why couldn't Kitty leave the subject alone?

She forgot that a minute before she had been

longing for her to speak.

"Gilbert says it's dreadful," she replied peevishly. "He found him sitting in his study in the middle of the afternoon, wearing an old dressing-gown. He hadn't even shazed for days, and looked awful. He does nothing at all, just sits there growling like a beast in pain—that's how Gilbert put it. He wasn't a bit pleased to see Gilbert, either—he was hardly civil, in fact. what can you do with a man like that? You'd much better leave him alone till he gets over it."

"My dear Sally, haven't you any human kindness at all in you?" asked Lady Guildford. "You are always hard, but to-day——"

"I can't help it, Georgie," replied Sally, rising. "I've simply no use for a man who isn't brave. If he'd taken it well, and made the best of things, I'd have respected him. As it is——" She broke off with a shrug.

"But he's blind, Sally," insisted her cousin. "Suppose that it had happened to

yourself?"

"That would be ever so much worse, of course," replied Sally calmly. "It would be much worse for a woman; and, anyhow, we're not supposed to be brave, and all that sort of thing. Men don't like us to be; they ever so much prefer us to be clinging and frightened. So, if we do make a fuss about little things, it's all quite natural and proper. Now, don't you see, if Mr. Ramsden would only go on with the book he's at and finish it, instead of sitting there growling like a beast in pain, as Gilbert says, it would sell like hot cakes. There would be all sorts of ducky little paragraphs in the papers about the blind novelist and his wonderful fort----'

"Stop it, Sally!" commanded Kitty, in a low, passionate voice, as she rose from her

"Well, well," laughed Sally rather uneasily, "don't let's talk any more about it. Besides, I must really go," she added, glancing at the clock. "Some people are coming to lunch, and I promised mother not to be late."

She held out her hand to say good-bye,

but Kitty did not take it.

"I'm coming to the door," she said quietly.
"Please don't bother, Kit; there's no need for ceremony, you know."
"Kitter I'll and the said quietly."

Kitty did not reply, but, walking to the door, waited for her cousin to follow, which, with a little shrug at the inevitable, Sally

did, and, once alone with Kitty, all her bravado seemed to forsake her.

"Come to my room," said Kitty; "I

want to talk to you."

"Really, I can't now, Kit. Mother won't like it if I'm late," objected Sally feebly, but she allowed herself to be pushed along and into Kitty's own sitting-room.

Closing the door, Kitty turned and faced

her cousin.

"Now," she said, "you will please explain why you have been talking in such an abominable fashion. I suppose you have broken your engagement with Martin Ramsden because he is blind now. That was to be expected. I can understand that, Sally. You always were selfish—selfish to the very core. You'd have no use for a blind husband, but why talk as you have done this morning? Have you no pity or shame in you ? "

Sally had always been jealous of her beautiful young cousin. She envied her, but she had seldom been able to lie to her as she lied to others. Somehow, she was afraid of Kitty, and she stood now before her as a criminal might before a judge.

"I hate him!" she said at last, throwing out her hands in a gesture of passionate

"Hate him!" cried Kitty, looking at her in cold surprise. "Why? Because you have wronged him? Because now, when he needs all the love and the help you could give him, you have forsaken him? Oh, you hate him, Sally, do you? Because you were engaged to him, and breaking it off now makes you look odious?"

Nothing could exceed the scorn in her

voice.

"That isn't true, Kitty; you've no right to talk like that!" cried Sally passionately. "I never was engaged to him." Then she suddenly stopped. She had not meant to say that, but her cousin's scorn had stung the truth from her.

Kitty leaned against the door as if for support, and for a moment her face showed only amazement; then suddenly it flushed, and her eyes shone with something more

than anger.

"I don't understand you, Sally," she said sternly. "Two days before I went abroad you told me quite distinctly that you and he were engaged. You gave me some silly reason for keeping the engagement secretsomething about his not being in a position to marry yet. Were you lying then, or are you lying now?"

"I've told you the truth," said Sally sullenly.

"Then or now?"

" Now."

"Then why——"

"Look here, Kitty," Sally burst out angrily, "I'm not going to stay here to be lectured and questioned like a naughty child! I won't stand it!" And, flinging herself into a chair, she began to cry softly.

"Don't cry," said Kitty more gently, and do try to tell me why you did it. I

want to understand."

"It was because I'm so sick of things at home," sobbed Sally. "You don't know what things are like at home. They are all as selfish as can be; they don't consider me a bit—I simply have to fight to have the least little bit of fun."

Kitty's smile was slightly ironical, but

Sally did not see it.

"Go on," she said, "I don't understand what Mr. Ramsden has got to do with it."

"Well, I do. Don't you see? The only way to get away from home is to get married. But I never had a chance till Mr. Ramsden came here. Then you turned up and spoilt it a!l. I tell you this, Kitty," said Sally, sitting up, dry-eyed and angry once more, "you call me selfish, but it's you who are selfish. You take everything just as your right; you rope in every man who comes along, and never give me a chance. But I was determined that you shouldn't have Martin, so I told you that we were engaged, and I thought that I could make it true before you came back—one reads stories, you know, about men marrying like that—out of pique. Now I hope you are satisfied."

Kitty looked away from her cousin's flushed and tear-stained face. She felt that she ought to be sorry for her, but she was herself still too hurt and angry to feel anything but scorn for the pitiful little schemer.

"I don't see why you are so sure that I was the cause of your failure," she said

coldly.

Slowly Sally's face flushed a painful red from neck to forehead. "That's why I hate him," she said in an angry whisper; "he told me so."

"He told you so!" echoed her cousin,

in surprise.

Sally flashed round upon her in wrath. "Good Heavens, Kitty," she cried, "can't you stop tormenting me? Yes, he told me—told me in so many words that I needn't run after him, for if he couldn't marry you, he'd never marry anyone. I hope you will

know some day what it feels like to be a 'woman scorned.' Oh, I hate you both!"

Kitty was suddenly filled with compunction, her heart just as suddenly light. "I'm sorry, Sally," she said, laying her hand on her cousin's shoulder. "I didn't mean to be such a little beast."

Sally shook her off. "It doesn't matter," she said, as she got up and put her hat straight. "I'm a perfect fright," she added, as she looked into the mirror, "and I shall be late for lunch, and that will mean another row."

"Come into my room and tidy," said

Kitty.

"Yes, I will," said Sally, "but you needn't come. I don't want you. I know the way well enough, and I'd rather be alone." And, without once looking at her cousin, she went out of the room.

Left alone, Kitty sat for a long time gazing into the fire, trying to think. Her heart was in a tumult of pity, love, and remorse. Martin moved her. He was blind, and the last time she had seen him she had behaved abominably. She went back over all the months of her friendship with him—the happy months during which she had drifted carelessly, knowing life was good, and hardly asking why, until she had been rudely awakened from her day-dreams by Sally's astounding statement that she was engaged to him.

"Why did I believe her? Why did I believe her?" moaned Kitty to herself.

But she had believed her, perhaps because she so ardently desired not to. Tingling with remorse, she remembered the last day when he had come to say good-bye, and she, still smarting under the blow to her pride, had behaved like a little savage. She could see even yet the puzzled pain in his face as he went away. He had written to her afterwards. That letter, Kitty saw now, ought to have opened her eyes; it was a letter that no honourable man would have written had he been engaged to another woman. But jealous anger and wounded pride had blinded her, and she had thrown it into the fire unanswered. "He must learn that he can't flirt with me, and be engaged to my cousin at the same time," she had said. Then she had set herself to forget. It was an impossible task, but, as the weeks passed, her anger cooled, and she had returned home with a passionate, almost a humble, desire

for his friendship again—on any terms.

And now he was blind and in despair.

She knew why he was taking the blow se

the more courage because Martin had such

funny old-fashioned ideas about women.

He would probably be shocked. Even in her

hardly. It was not merely that he had lost his sight-he had lost love and hope, and everything that made life worth living. She alone could bring these back to him.

Not for a moment did she doubt his love

for her now-Sally's passionate confession had made her sure-only this miserable misunderstanding lay between them. remained with her to remove it. But she must do more than that. Knowing Ramsden as she did, she was well assured that, maimed, he would never ask for the love he had hardly dared to hope for before. She must make him take it. And that needed courage. It needed all "Carefully and softly she opened the door once more, and then stood a moment amazed."

misery she smiled whimsically to herself at the idea. Oh, yes, it would need courage, and Sally had said women were not expected to be brave!

Kitty was roused from her musings by the sound of the luncheon gong. It was rather a silent meal, for, as a rule, Kitty did most of the talking, and to-day she had little to say.

"Are you doing anything this afternoon, Georgie?" she asked, as they rose from the

I'm going to see poor Ramsden," replied Lady Guildford. ordered the motor."

"I thought you might be," said Kitty. "But would you mind putting it off till to-morrow?"

"Why, Kitty," said her sister, with some surprise, "I thought you'd want me to go as soon as possible."

"Yes, so I do, but not to-day, because

I'm going."

"Well, then, we can go together. In any case, you couldn't go alone.

Kitty laughed.

"You dear old-fashioned thing, Georgie," she said, as she put her arm round her coaxingly, "1 suppose you think that it isn't proper. You and Martin are just a pair. I don't think he'll think it proper, either. But I can't help that. I'm going."

"Then I shall come with you," said her

sister, with unwonted determination.

"All right, then, you can come," said Kitty, after a moment's hesitation. "Only you must stay outside, or in another room, or wherever you are put, till I tell you that you can come in."

Lady Guildford sat down again heavily, looking up at her young sister anxiously. She was a great deal older than Kitty, and

had mothered her all her life.

"What are you going to do?" she asked.

"I'm going to see him," said Kitty, with

determination.

"Kitty darling, I was afraid this would hurt you—that you cared—only when we were away, you seemed ---- Kitty, dear, you can't do anything! What do you want to do ? "

"I'm going to see him," she repeated

doggedly.

"I don't like it, Kitty," said Georgie uneasily. "I think you ought to let me go to see him first."

Kitty shook her head. "You can't do anything, Georgie dear. I've got to do it all. But I'd like to have you near."

Lady Guildford still looked doubtful, and, with a sudden movement, Kitty knelt beside her and put her head on her shoulder.

"See here, big sister, don't look like that. I've spent the morning screwing up my courage, and now you are trying to make me think I'm going to do something awful. and all my courage is oozing out of my finger-tips. It isn't awful, it's natural. I'm as sure as sure that Martin loves me, and I love him, but we had a silly little misunderstanding. And now that he's blind, he'll never try to clear it up, he'll never tell me—anything. He'll think of his own pride, and helplessness, and my 'youth and beauty and beastly money—of everything except my happiness. So it's up to me to do the talking, for I'm not going to my grave an old maid just because a man's blind in more senses than one."

So Kitty had her way.

When they reached Ramsden's house, the door was opened to them by an anxiouslooking woman. "The master isn't seeing anyone," she replied, in answer to their inquiry.

'Yes, we know," said Kitty, in her most commanding tone, "but we are Mr. Ramsden's very good friends. We have been abroad, or we would have come before.

He will see us."

The servant gave way at once with evident relief.

"I'm real glad to hear it," she said, "for I'm at my wits' end. He hardly eats a thing, and is that thin I'm fair scared of him."

" Never mind," said Kitty, smiling kindly at her. "I'm sure you have done your best, and things will be better now that we have come home. I will go to see Mr. Ramsden while you talk to my sister. Just show me the way."

"Is that you, Bartlette," said Ramsden, as Kitty opened the door. "What do you want? ",

"It's not Bartlette," said Kitty breath-lessly; "it's me."

"Good Heavens!" said Ramsden sharply, as he rose to his feet and turned his sightless eyes towards her. "What's that? Who's there?"

Kitty's heart was wrung at the sight of him. It was better and worse than she had expected. He was shaven and clothed, but he was thin to gauntness, and his face was white and lined with misery.

"It's Kitty," she said, hardly above her

breath.

"Kitty," he echoed- "Kitty!"

She had never known how two words could tell so much. There was wonder in them and joy and a world of tenderness. For a moment his face was transformed, then the light faded out of it as quickly as it had come.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Manners," he said stiffly. "I was taken by surprise. Is

Howard with you?"

"Howard?" repeated Kitty. "Howard? Do you mean my cousin, Gilbert Howard? What has he got to do with us, Martin?"

"But I understood, I thought—his sister

told me——'' stammered Ramsden.

With a sickening sense of dismay, it flashed on Kitty that here was still another part of Sally's pitiful scheme, still another

lie to combat.

"Oh, I see!" she gasped. "Sally told you that I was engaged to my cousin, and you believed it! You believed it, Martin. You ought not to have done that; you ought to have known me better---''

She suddenly paused. Had she not done the same thing ? Like a fool, she, too, had

believed Sally.

"It doesn't matter," said Ramsden dully; "it doesn't matter in the least. only thought that perhaps he was with you. It's awfully good of you to come, Miss Manners. Won't you sit down? You see, I'm such a duffer still, I don't think that I can find you a chair-I'm only learning my way about."

Kitty's heart sank. For a moment she had seen the real man. That whispered "Kitty!" had told her all her heart ached to know. Now she was confronted with a

stony politeness.

"You are not being nice to me, Martin," she said softly, as she laid her hand upon his arm and with gentle force pushed him back into the chair from which he had just risen. She felt him tremble at her touch, but she kept her hand upon his arm as she knelt beside him.

"You are not being nice to me," she repeated. "I don't call you 'Mr. Ramsden,' and you didn't call me ' Miss Manners ' when I first came in. Let's end this silly pretence."

Ramsden sat rigid with tightly-closed lips. It was going to be harder, Kitty saw, even than she had thought. Giving a sharp little sigh, she released his arm, and with a quick gesture pulled the pins out of her hat and flung it on the floor. Even in his blindness Ramsden guessed what she was doing. He had seen the impatient action so often. "I can never do anything really big with my hat on," she had once said to him. "Don't you notice that you can always beat me at tennis if I wear a hat, and if I don't I can beat you? So you may know I'm out to win when I throw off my hat." She was out to win now, but Ramsden braced himself to her defeat. With a flash of sure instinct, he knew why she had come, what she meant to do. That was Kitty all over-beautiful, generous, and impulsive. But such a sacrifice he couldn't He must stop her somehow, or hurt her horribly. He passionately desired not to hurt her, but if he couldn't stop her, it would have to be done, to save her and himself, too, from long years of regret. If he could only see! Never before had he felt the full helplessness of his blindness.

Kitty knelt beside him, silently watching his white strained face, trying to read his

thoughts. At last he spoke.

"You had better go," he said. "My nerves are very rocky still. I hardly know what I'm saying sometimes, and my temper's beastly."

"You poor darling!" said Kitty softly. Martin shrank from the tender tone as if

he had been struck.

"Please go!" he implored. "I can't," Kitty answered, " not till I've said what I came to say. Last time we met," she continued rapidly, "do you remember, I was horrid to you, and then I never answered your letter, which was worse. Do you know why I did these things? It was because someone told me that you were engaged to another woman, and I was angry and jealous. But it wasn't true, and now I know you loved me all the time."

"It wasn't true," said Martin slowly, as if the words were being dragged from him. It wasn't true, but if it had been, this "and he touched his blinded eyes-" would have put an end to it. I couldn't marry any woman as I am now."

"Yes, you can," whispered Kitty softly. "You can marry me, because I love youbecause we love each other."

Martin drew his breath sharply. "You are mistaken," he said tensely. "I never loved you."

" Martin, you cannot look me in the face

and say that!"

The cry of wounded love and pride cut Martin to the heart, but his voice was hard and bitter.

" You are quite right—I cannot look you

in the face."

"Oh, no, Martin, I didn't mean that. I

didn't mean to hurt you! But you know you love me—you made me think so."

The veins stood out on his forehead like cords, and he gripped the arms of his chair

"You force me to a very vile confession," he said at last. "Have you never heard of women who were courted for their money? You are a very rich woman, Miss Manners, but even I, base as I may be, would not dare to tie an unloved woman to a blind stock such as I am. I have at least more manhood than that. Now do you understand?"

Yes, at last she understood. It was only her money that he had wooed! Could the man who sat there making his "vile confession" so calmly be the man she loved? Slowly she rose to her feet, and, stricken and dazed with misery, she groped her way to the door, almost as blindly as he might have done. So without another word she left him.

Once outside, she stood for a moment bowed with shame, shrinking even from herself. What had she done? What was it Sally had said about a woman scorned? But it was only Sally's ambition that had been hurt. Her love had been scorned. The beautiful thing she had offered had come back to her corrupt, for it was rooted in a lie.

Slowly the bitter minutes passed, but at last a thought of Georgie, patiently waiting for her, pierced Kitty's numbed brain. Georgie would have to be lied to. Even she should never guess the depths of her sister's humiliation. She must think of some lie. They were all liars together—Sally, Martin, and herself.

Kitty passed her hands over her face as if she could sweep the lines of pain away; and smoothed her hair mechanically with trembling hands. Then suddenly she remembered her hat. She had left it in that room of horror. She was too dazed to think clearly, but the one overpowering necessity of the moment seemed to be to meet Georgie serene and ordinary, as if nothing horrible had happened. She couldn't go flying to her hatless, like the mad woman she felt.

She shrank at the thought of returning to the room. But, after all, Martin couldn't see, and if he heard her, or spoke, she need

not answer. It had to be done.

Carefully and softly she opened the door once more, and then stood a moment amazed. Martin, his face buried in his arms, lay huddled in his chair, sobbing as if his heart would break. The hard, dry sound of agony was very terrible, and Kitty stood petrified. Then suddenly she heard her own name.

"Kitty," he groaned, "Kitty, my darling, I would have given my life for you!"

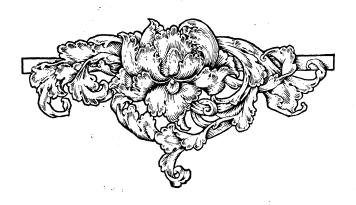
In a moment she was beside him, her arms about his neck, her cheek against his. "Oh, Martin," she whispered, "how dared you make me so miserable?"

Then his arms went round her, and he held her as if he would never let her go.

"Say you love me—say you love me now!" whispered Kitty passionately.

"I love you, darling, I love you! I never meant to let you know, but I'm a coward, Kitty, I can't face life without you. I'm a selfish brute. Forgive me, Kitty!"

"Yes, you are selfish," laughed Kitty happily. "You never thought of me, or how I was going to face life without you. You are dreadfully untruthful—how could you tell such a horrid lie?—and disgustingly proud, too, not to say quite antique in your ideas of honour, but I love you just the same!"



THE RING

By H. F. FRAMPTON

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

IN the first meadow on the right-hand side of the road, as you left the town in the direction of the golf links, tents and stalls were being erected by a busy swarm of men under the supervision of a curate. His assistance was of more value than would seem likely; he was chatting with a group of ladies well out of the workers'

Bernard Ridgewell and young Peter Lester, each shouldering a bag of golf clubs, paused on their way into the town for tea in order to read the bill which was posted on a board at the gate. The captions

proclaimed:

Annual Bazaar and Fête

(First since the War)

In Aid of Byefield and District Unemployed.

Ridgewell proceeded to scan the letter-

press. "You won't be here to-morrow after-

noon," Lester remarked presently, "and I'm hungry, so what's the good of ploughing through all that print?"

"Your remark smacks of ingratitude," replied Ridgewell, without turning his head. "made, as it is, by one of the Byefield and

District unemployed."

" I shall work hard enough up at Oxford," grinned Lester. "The deadly monotony of this place would make a tramp sigh for

wood to saw."

"You'll be getting into some sort of mischief if you're not careful," Ridgewell told him. "Come and commence your studies with a little ecclesiastical English. I've read through the bill, and now I'm going to read it again. I like the literary style."

"So long!" said his companion abruptly, "See you to-night!" he and moved on.

called over his shoulder.

Ridgewell continued to gaze at the bill. He was still gazing at it when the field-gate swung open and a lady passed through the opening into the road. She was under thirty, dark and graceful, with a sweet, serious regard made piquant by the smile struggling for expression in the depth of her grey eyes. She was a comparative new-comer to Byefield, the widow of a man named Dale, and Ridgewell had made her acquaintance one afternoon on the links, when he had been her partner in a foursome, owing to the non-arrival of another man.

"The bill doesn't mention the fortune-

teller, does it?" she greeted him.

He replaced his cap and strolled forward,

"Not a word," he replied. "Is there going

to be one?"

She was wearing a light tweed costume and carried a stick, and Ridgewell found no difficulty in accommodating his pace to hers.

"Of course," she answered him gaily. "She comes with a reputation, too, and that's all we know about her. I fancy Audrey had a lot of trouble in persuading her father to let her import a gipsv.'

"The Vicar would naturally set his face against necromancy," rejoined Ridgewell

sententiously.

"I don't think it was that exactly," smiled Margaret Dale. "He was probably surprised that Audrey should claim acquaintance with a fortune-teller. However, she has had her way, as usual, and she is running that part of the fête entirely on her

" I should like to have my fortune told." Ridgewell said pathetically. "Nobody yet has ever prophesied me large sums of money or promised me bounteous legacies of

happiness."

"You will be able to buy your share of both to-morrow afternoon," laughed his

companion, "for half-a-crown."

"Unfortunately," Ridgewell explained, "I pay a duty call to-morrow afternoon. However," he went on brightly, "I believe my hostess tells fortunes from tea-leaves. I'll get her to tell me mine. You get the gipsy to tell yours, and let's compare the results!"

"Compare?"

"The reason I ask for that," Ridgewell said seriously, "is that somehow I have the feeling that perhaps—er—perhaps our futures——"

"It sounds as if you believe in the black

arts," she cut in hastily.

Ridgewell came to a standstill—it was the parting of their ways—and removed a signet-ring from the third finger of his right hand. A minute sphinx was engraven on the grey stone, and the band was of gold. In shape the stone was distinctive—a pentagon.

"This is one of those rings," he said impressively, "which compel their wearers to speak the truth. My friends can testify to its potency. They never ask me what I think of them. Before I acquired the ring my philosophy held no dreams of the occult.

Since then—

"I don't think the gipsy is likely to be wearing one," Mrs. Dale interrupted, "and I don't think the potency of yours is very well established, since only your friends

can testify to it.'

"Oh, but my enemies can, too," insisted Ridgewell blandly. "Recently one of them trod on my foot." He replaced the ring on his finger. "It is sometimes inevitable that the victims should refer to such people as 'clumsy elephants,' 'clumsy asses,' or even 'clumsy hounds,' all of which expressions neglect the strict truth. I was, however, wearing the ring at the time—in addition to tight shoes—and after my natural instinct to make use of one of these terms had been subdued by the ring's influence, I eventually recovered speech by addressing him as—."

He paused and took off the ring again.
"Perhaps the exact truth could be

"Perhaps the exact truth could bear suppression on this occasion," he concluded.

Mrs. Dale laughed as she turned away.

"I'll consult the gipsy," she promised, "but I won't undertake to tell you the result. It might be a little too confidential to confide to a man with a ring like yours."

The following afternoon only the tops of the tents, flying strange flags, were visible from the roadway, for the meadow was peopled with buyers, sellers, and sightseers, all more or less helping to contribute to the success of the occasion and to the noise with which the success was being achieved. Under one or other of the three headings named, Byefield seemed to have contributed a representative of all grades of the townsfolk from a domiciled tramp to the mayor.

The District had sent chiefly its womenfolk, apparently leaving its men-folk to get their own tea.

At four o'clock the sun was still fairly high in the cloudless blue sky, and Mrs. Dale had cleared her stall, with the exception of a trousers-press and a wicker basket with a handle missing. As trade had all along been brisk and patronage generous, it became obvious at last that Byefield pressed its trousers by sleeping on them and had no use for defective baskets.

Although the women outnumbered the men by at least two to one, most of the triumphant saleswoman's patrons had been men. A less modest person than Margaret Dale might have experienced no surprise at the reflection, but by far the larger part of her stock had been selected to appeal to the female proportion of the attendance. She had had no assistance, and began to feel the heat. It was a relief when her reflections were at length interrupted by a girl, daintily dressed in white, who took her away to the refreshment tent and accommodated her with a seat and an ice.

"Where is Mr. Lester?" Margaret in-

auired

"Everybody asks me that," replied Audrey Mellor, dimpling. "I let the poor boy loose sometimes, you know."

"You should have stationed him outside

the gipsy's tent to collect the money."

"I thought of that," Audrey responded, with a little gurgle of laughter. "It wasn't exciting enough for him. And that reminds me: you haven't been to consult the gipsy yet, have you? Come along; it's only half-a-crown."

"And who gets the money—the gipsy or

the unemployed?"

"The latter, of course," returned the young lady precisely. "What do you think? Here we are. In you go, and good luck! I am going to look for some more victims."

An animated crowd formed a semicircle round the open flap of the tent, and badinage was being freely exchanged. It was not until later that Margaret realised the significance of the crowd's exuberance, and discovered that the gipsy's revelations had caused something of a stir.

The interior of the tent was dimly lighted by a pink-shaded reading-lamp, which stood on a square table opposite the entrance. The table also supported an unbroken pack of playing-cards, but was otherwise unlittered. Beyond it, gravely motionless, sat a darkskinned crone, mantled over head and



"The idle hand was the right one, and bore on its third finger the sphinx-engraven signet-ring."

shoulders by a multi-coloured shawl, and with hands apparently clasped in the lap of her voluminous skirt. Her words came in a harsh cackle.

"The pretty lady wishes to peer into

the future?"

"If you please," said Margaret seriously.
"Please don't tell me anything terrible. If it's inclined to be very unpleasant, I'd rather pay the half-crown and not—""

"If the future smiles, you shall smile too," broke in the crone. "If it frowns, you shall be warned. Your left hand, pretty lady—so. Thank you."

She broke into a chant:

"Fair or dark, tall or short,
The nerve cannot hide what the heart is taught.
Tall or short, dark or fair,
The trembling hand lays the secret bare."

It is probable that Margaret's hand

trembled during the recital. Her fingers rested on the seer's dusky palm. The ensuing

silence inspired awe.

"Your future is untroubled," obligingly announced the crone at length. "You shall be happy and shall make happy. He shall deserve your love. He is neither tall nor short; he is fair and pleasant-looking. You shall know him by the wound scar on his neck. He——"

"Thank you," said Margaret Dale drily.

"I think I know him already."

The description was sufficiently indicative of Bernard Ridgewell to make further details superfluous. Mrs. Dale turned to leave the tent. It seemed clear to her that somebody had primed the crone. She suspected Audrey, until the crone recalled her with a hint as to the half-crown. She placed the coin on the table, and the crone's hithertoidle other hand left the lap and collected the silver.

Mrs. Dale was smiling wickedly as she

quitted the tent.

The idle hand was the right one, and bore on its third finger the sphinx-engraven signet-ring.

"For a man with a quiet disposition like mine," Ridgewell was saying, "the future is dark and full of menace. A fair girl, vivacious and fun-loving, is to play a large part in my lonely life. Vivacious and fun-loving! It's too much. If there's anything I've looked forward to more than anything else, it's quiet domesticity—you know, a pair of carpet slippers warming in front of the blazing log fire, a glass of wine, a book of verse, and———Well, perhaps I've been hoping for too much; but if ever I get into Parliament, the use of tea-strainers at meal-times will be compulsory."

Mrs. Dale was embroidering. Her face, inscrutable in its expression when she looked up from her task, was lowered, and the lamp-light was striking flashes of pale-green fire from the tiny-bead edging of her dark green evening gown. The Vicar had but just gone; he had been very grateful in tendering his thanks. It was clear that rumours of the gipsy's candour to certain indignant ladies of his own and of other parishes concerned

had not yet reached his ears.

"And then," pursued Ridgewell, "it appears that I am, as they say in the Army, for it.' I am to go through lots of trouble, and, if I am not careful, my experiences will coarsen me. Lots of trouble and coarsening experiences! This to a man who has spent

two years trying to do the eighteen holes

in bogey!"

"You have probably done something terrible in the past to deserve such a gloomy future," Mrs. Dale suggested callously.

Ridgewell waited to catch her eye, and

then looked pained.

"I thought I had your sympathy," he protested, indignant.

She made no reply.

"I would rather have a gloomy future and your sympathy," he went on, "than a bright one and your indifference."

The lightness had left his tones. Mrs

Dale moved a little restlessly.

"The conversation is hardly worthy of two grown-up people, is it?" she pointed out. "Neither of us really believes in the ability of others to peer into our futures. I am sure I have no faith in the—in the impostor who pretended to peer into mine this afternoon."

His face betrayed nothing to her covert

glance.

"You are quite right," he agreed. "If I thought there was the least possibility of a vivacious girl causing me a lot of trouble and coarsening my nature, I should go about with my fingers crossed."

Mrs. Dale smiled grimly.

"I am glad you agree with me," she said carelessly. "My own future happiness is alleged to be dependent on a fair man of medium height with the mark of a wound on his—on his neck. I am to be happy, you see; but then one doesn't expect to pay money and be promised a troubled future. You should have insisted on making a contribution to charity in return for your forecast, and perhaps it would have been more pleasant."

Silence followed this avowal.

"I know exactly what a lion feels like now," said Ridgewell presently, "when somebody has thrown a fishing-net over it."

Mrs. Dale was spared what was by no means a necessity for asking what he meant by the arrival of Lester and Audrey Mellor. Lester was taciturn and preternaturally dignified, but Audrey was in splendid spirits, and began to chatter vivaciously of the bazaar or, rather, of the fête.

"Fifty-three people had their fortunes told this afternoon," she stated in due course, with much more delight than the fact seemed to require. "What do fifty-three half-crowns amount to, Mr. Ridge-

well ? ;;

"Fifty-three half-crowns," replied Ridge-

well gloomily, "amount to a great deal of happiness. It's wonderful what money will

buy."
"If you mean to infer that the fortuneteller only told people agreeable things,' retorted Audrey, "you're wrong." Risibility overcame her. "P-people say she was v-very candid."

"She must have been wearing my ring,"

Ridgewell commented.

"She—or, rather, he—was," confirmed Margaret Dale quietly. "I saw it on his finger when he stretched out his hand to pick up my half-crown."

In the succeeding pause Ridgewell turned his gaze slowly from Mrs. Dale's face to

Lester's. Lester rose at once.

"We oughtn't to stay long, Audrey," he

announced. "We-

"So the reason you borrowed my ring," said Ridgewell distinctly, "becomes clear! You were the mysterious 'gipsy' friend of Miss Mellor's! And the ring was part of the make-up, I suppose? I wonder what people will say when-"

confusedly. "You needn't go about telling everybody."

"Please don't!" supported Audrey "It will only cause bother. And you won't, either, will you, Mrs. Dale? After all, you said yourself that Peter ought to have been the gipsy-or, at least, the man who collects the money, which is as bad. I really only intended him to collect the money, too. He would go one better."

"Well, if that isn't the limit!" exclaimed Lester promptly. "It was you who said--"

"It doesn't matter who it was," pronounced Miss Mellor, "so long as nothing

"I quite agree with you, Audrey," said Mrs. Dale, with an indignant glance at the "gipsy." "Mr. Lester's conduct is a surprise to me."

"I'm frightfully sorry," apologised Lester. "The fact is-er-I-er-

He turned abjectly to Ridgewell and held

out the signet-ring. "You might as well have it back," he

"Not," said Ridgewell, declining it, "if I'm to be in this conspiracy of silence.

Fighting down my native veracity will, as it is, tax me to the uttermost."

The culprits made an ignominious exit. Ridgewell shook himself as he resumed his

"I feel," he remarked, "like a netted lion whose meshes have been sundered by a

friendly knife."

"It's quite time," complained Mrs. Dale decisively, "that Mr. Lester was back at school."

"Was his the blame entirely, do you think?" suggested Ridgewell gently.

Margaret Dale suddenly laughed.

"Whoever was to blame," she replied, "it disposes of the prophecies. His makeup and manner were really very clever."

She glanced at him a little remorsefully and seemed about to say something further.

" I am sorry you should make that statement with such relief," Ridgewell told her. "It sounds as though you are glad to be rid of the menace of the fair man with the scar."

"I did not mean my words to bear that

interpretation," she slowly rejoined.

"Thank you for that," Ridgewell said fervently.

She looked at him with pretended puzzle-

"I mean," resumed he, "that I have somehow identified myself with this scarred and blond individual in whose hands your happiness lies, and, that being so-

In whose hands," corrected Margaret almost inaudibly, "it might have lain had

the 'gipsy' not been an impostor."

Ridgewell got to his feet, bent over her, and insisted upon retaining one of her hands. He held it silently until she was obliged to look up and meet his gaze

"One thing is certain," he said gravely, and that is that my happiness lies in your hands. Please don't disappoint me,

Margaret."

"I think," she responded, "that perhaps the impostor may have—have been telling the truth, after all."

He drew her up into his arms and kissed

her.
"He must have been," asserted Ridgewell. "Have you forgotten that he was wearing the ring?"

THE FISHERS OF THE AIR

By CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

Author of "Kings in Exile," "Neighbours Unknown," "The Secret Trails," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

THE lake lay in a deep and sun-soaked valley facing south, sheltered from the sea-winds by a high hog-back of dark green spruce and hemlock forest, broken sharply here and there by out-

croppings of white granite.

Beyond the hog-back, some three or four miles away, the green seas creamed and thundered in sleepless turmoil against the towering black cliffs, clamorous with seagulls. But over the lake brooded a blue and glittering silence, broken only, at long intervals, by the long-drawn, wistful flutecry of the Canada whitethroat from some solitary tree-top—

Lean—lean—lean-to-me—lean-to-me—lean-to-me—of all bird voices the one most poignant with loneliness and longing.

On the side of the lake nearest to the hog-back the dark green of the forest came down to within forty or fifty paces of the water's edge, and was fringed by a narrow ribbon of very light, tender green—a dense, low growth of Indian willow, elder shrub, withe-wood, tangled with clematis and starred with wild convolvulus. From the sharply-defined edge of this gracious tangle a beach of clean sand, dazzlingly white, sloped down to and slid beneath the transparent golden lip of the amber-tinted water. The sand, both below and above the water's edge, was of an amazing radiance. Being formed by the infinitely slow breaking down of the ancient granite, through ages of alternating suns and rains and heats and frosts, it consisted purely of the indestructible, coarse white crystals of the quartz, whose facets caught the sun like a drift of diamonds.

The opposite shores of the lake were low and swampy, studded here and there with tall, naked, weather-bleached "rampikes" —the trunks of ancient fir trees blasted and stripped by some long-past forest fire. These melancholy ghosts of trees rose from a riotously gold-green carpet of rank marshgrasses, sweeping around in an interminable, unbroken curve to the foot of the lake, where, through the cool shadows of waterash and balsam-poplar, the trout-haunted outlet stream rippled away musically to join the sea some seven or eight miles farther on. All along the gold-green sweep of the marsh-grass spread acre upon acre of the flat leaves of the water-lily, starred with broad, white, golden-hearted, exquisitely-perfumed blooms, the paradise of the wild bees and honey-loving summer

Over this vast crystal bowl of green-andamber solitude domed a sky of cloudless blue, and high in the blue hung a great bird, slowly wheeling. From his height he held in view the intense sparkling of the sea beyond the hog-back, the creaming of the surf about the outer rocks, and the sudden upspringing of the gulls, like a puff of blown petals, as some wave, higher and more impetuous than its predecessor, drove them from their perches. But the aerial watcher had heed only for the lake below him, lying windless and unshadowed in the His piercing eyes, jewel-bright, and with an amazing range of vision, could penetrate to all the varying depths of the lake and detect the movements of its finny hordes. The great sluggish lake-trout, or "togue," usually lurking in the obscurest deeps, the shining, active, vermilion-spotted brook-trout, foraging voraciously nearer the shore and the surface, the fat, mudloving "suckers," rooting the oozy bottom

like pigs among the roots of the water-lilies, the silvery chub and the green-and-gold, fiercely-spined perch haunting the weedy feeding-grounds down toward the outlet—all these he observed, and differentiated with an expert's eye, attempting to foresee which ones, in their feeding or their play, were likely soonest to approach the surface of their glimmering golden world.

Suddenly he paused in his slow wheeling, dipped forward, and dropped, with narrowed wings, down, down from his dizzy height to within something like fifty yards of the water. Here he stopped, with wings widespread, and hovered almost motionless, slowly sinking like a waft of thistledown when the breeze has died away. He had seen a fair-sized trout rise lightly and suck in a fly which had fallen on the bright surface. The ringed ripples of the rise had hardly smoothed away when the trout rose again. As it gulped its tiny, half-drowned prey, the poised bird shot downward again —urged by a powerful surge of his wings before he closed them—this time with terrific speed. He struck the water with a resounding splash, disappeared beneath it, and rose again two or three yards beyond with the trout securely gripped in his talons. Shaking the bright drops in a shower from his wings, he flapped hurriedly away with his capture to his nest on the steep slope of the hog-back. He flew with eager haste, as fast as his broad wings would carry him; for he feared lest his one dreaded foe, the great white-headed eagle, should swoop down out of space on hissing pinions and rob him of his prize.

The nest of the osprey was built in the erotch of an old, lightning-blasted pine which rose from a fissure in the granite about fifty feet above the lake. osprey had practically no foes to be dreaded except that tyrannical robber, the great white-headed eagle-which, indeed, only cared to rob him of his fish, and never dared drive him to extremities by appearing to threaten his precious nestlings—the nest was built without any pretence of concealment, or, indeed, any attempt at inaccessibility, save such as was afforded by the high, smooth, naked trunk which supported An immense grey, weather-beaten structure, conspicuous for miles, it looked like a loose cartload of rubbish, but in reality the sticks and dried rushes and mud and strips of shredded bark of which it was built were so solidly and cunningly interwoven as

to withstand the wildest of winter gales. It was his permanent summer home, to which he and his handsome, daring mate were wont to return each spring from their winter sojourn in the sun lands of the south. A little tidying-up, a little patching with sticks and mud, a relining with feathers and soft, winter-withered grasses, and the old nest was quickly ready to receive the eggs of his mate—beautiful and precious eggs, two, three, or four in number, and usually of the rich colour of old ivory very thickly splashed with a warm purplish brown

with a warm purplish brown. This summer there were four nestlings in the great untidy nest; and they kept both their devoted parents busy, catching and tearing up into convenient morsels fish enough to satisfy their vigorous appetites. At the moment when the father osprey returned from the lake with the trout which he had just caught they were full-fed and fast asleep, their downy heads and halffeathered, scrawny necks comfortably resting across one another's pulsing bodies. mother-bird, who had recently fed them, was away, fishing in the long green-grey seas beyond the hog-back. The father, seeing them thus satisfied, tore up the trout and swallowed it, with dignified deliberation, himself. Food was plentiful, and he was not over-hungry. Then, having scrupulously wiped his beak and preened his feathers, he settled himself upright on the edge of the nest and became apparently lost in contemplation of the spacious and tranquil scene outspread beneath him. A pair of bustling little crow-blackbirds, who had made their own small home among the outer sticks of the gigantic nest, flew backwards and forwards diligently, bringing insects in their bills for their naked, newly-hatched Their metallic black plumage shone iridescently, purple and green and radiant blue, in the unclouded sunlight, and from time to time the great osprey rolled his eyes upon them with a mild and casual interest. Neither he nor his mate had the slightest objection to their presence—being amicably disposed towards all living creatures except fish and possible assailants of the nest. And the blackbirds dwelt in security under that powerful, though involuntary, protection.

The osprey, the great fish-hawk or fish-eagle of Eastern North America; was the most attractive, in character, of all the predatory tribes of the hawks and eagles. Of dauntless courage without being quarrel-some or tyrannical, he strictly minded his own business which was that of catching

fish; and none of the wild folk of the forest, whether furred or feathered, had cause to fear him so long as they threatened no peril to his home or young. On account of this well-known good reputation he was highly respected by the hunters and lumbermen and scattered settlers of the backwoods, and it was held a gross breach of the etiquette of the wilderness to molest him or disturb his nest. Even the fish he took—and he was a most tireless and successful fisherman—were not greatly grudged to him; for his chief depredations were upon the coarse-fleshed and always superabundant chub and suckers, which no human fisherman would be at the trouble to catch.

With all this good character to his credit, he was at the same time one of the handsomest of the great hawks. About two feet in length, he was of sturdy build, with immensely powerful wings whose tips reached to the end of his tail. All his upper parts were of a soft dark brown, laced delicately and sparsely with white, and the crown of his broad-skulled, intelligent head heavily splashed with white. All his underparts were pure white except the tail, which was crossed with five or six even bars of pale umber. His long and masterful beak, curved like a sickle and nearly as sharp, was black; while his formidable talons, able to pierce to the vitals of their prey at the first clutch, were of a clean grey-blue. His eyes, large and fullorbed, with a beautiful ruby-tinted iris encircling the intense black pupil, were gem-like in their brilliance, but lacked the implacable ferocity of the eyes of the eagle and the goshawk.

Presently, flying low over the crest of the hog-back with a gleaming mackerel in her talons, appeared his mate. Arriving swiftly at the nest, and finding the nestlings still asleep, she deposited the mackerel in a niche among the sticks, where it lay flashing back the sun from its blue-barred sides, and set herself to preening her feathers, still wet from her briny plunge. The male osprey, after a glance at the prize, seemed to think it was up to him to go her one better. a high-pitched, musical, staccato cry of Pip-pip-pip-pip-pip-pip-very small and childish to come from so formidable a beak -he launched himself majestically from the edge of the nest and sailed off over the hot green tops of the spruce and fir to the lake.

Instead of soaring to his "watch-tower in the blue," he flew now quite low, not more than fifty feet or so above the water; for a swarm of small flies was over the lake, and

the fish were rising to them freely. In every direction he saw the little widening rings of ripple, each of which meant a fish, large or small, feeding at the surface. His wide, alldiscerning eyes could pick and choose, Whimsically ignoring a number of tempting quarry, he winnowed slowly to the further side of the lake, and then, pausing to hover just above the line where the water-lilies ended, he dropped suddenly, struck the water with a heavy splash, half submerging himself, and rose at once, his wings beating the spray, with a big silver chub in his claws. He had his prey gripped near the tail, so that it hung, twisting and writhing with inconvenient violence, head downwards. At about twenty-five or thirty feet above the water he let it go, and swooping after it caught it again dexterously in mid-air, close to the head, as he wanted it. In this position the inexorable clutch of his needle-tipped talons pierced the life out of the chub, and its troublesome squirming ceased.

Flying slowly with his solid burden, he had just about reached the centre of the lake when an ominous hissing in the air above warned him that his mighty foe, from far up in the blue dome, had marked his capture and was swooping down to rob him of the prize. He swerved sharply, and in the next second the eagle, a wide-winged, silvery-headed bird of twice his size, shot downward past him with a strident scream and a rustle of stiff-set plumes, swept under him in a splendid curve, and came back at him with wide-open beak and huge talons outspread. He was too heavily laden either to fight or dodge, so he discreetly dropped the fish. With a lightning swoop his tormentor caught it before it could reach the water, and flew off with it to his eyrie in a high, inaccessible ravine at the farthest end of the hogback, several miles down the outlet stream. The osprey, taking quite philosophically a discomfiture which he had suffered so many times before, stared after the magnificent pirate angrily for a few seconds, then circled away to seek another quarry. He knew that now he would be left in peace to enjoy what he might take.

But this time, in his exasperated anxiety more than to make good his loss, his ambition somewhat overreached itself. To borrow the pithy phrase of the backwoodsman, he "bit off more than he could chew."

One of those big grey lake-trout, or "togue," which, as a rule, lurk obstinately in the utmost depths, rose slowly to investigate the floating body of a dead swallow.

Pausing a few inches below the surface, he considered as to whether he should gulp down the morsel or not. Deciding, through some fishy caprice, to leave it alone—possibly he had once been hooked, and broken himself free with a painful gullet!—he was just turning away to sink lazily back into the depths when something like a thunderbolt crashed down upon the water just above him, and fiery pincers of horn fixed themselves deep into his massive back.

With a convulsive surge of his broadfluked, muscular tail he tried to dive, and for And so the furious struggle, half upon and half above the surface, went on between these two so evenly-matched opponents, while the formented water boiled and foamed and showers of bright spray leapt into the air. But the osprey was fighting with brains as well as with wings and talons. He was slowly but surely urging his adversary over toward that white beach below the hog-back, where, in the shallows, he would have him at his mercy and be able to end the duel with a stroke or two of his rending beak. If his strength could hold out till he gained the



"The inexorable clutch of his needle-tipped talons pierced the life out of the chub, and its troublesome squirming ceased."

a second drew his assailant clean under. But in the next moment the osprey, with a mighty beating of wings which thrashed the water into foam, forced him to the surface and lifted him clear. But he was too heavy for his captor, and almost immediately he found himself partly back in his own element, sufficiently submerged to make mighty play with his lashing tail. For all his frantic struggles, however, he could not again get clear under, so as to make full use of his strength; and neither could his adversary, for all his tremendous flapping, succeed in holding him in the air for more than a second or two at a time.

beach, he would be sure of victory. But the strain, as unusual as it was tremendous, was already beginning to tell upon him, and he was yet some way from shore.

His mate, in the meantime, had been watching everything from her high perch on the edge of the nest. At sight of the robber eagle's attack and his theft of the chub her crest feathers had lifted angrily, but she had made no vain move to interfere. She knew that such an episode was all in the day's fishing, and might be counted a cheap way of purchasing immunity for the time. When her gallant partner first lifted the big lake-trout into the air, her bright eyes flamed

with fierce approval. But when she saw that he was in difficulties her whole expression changed. Her eyes narrowed, and she leaned forward intently with half-raised wings. A moment more, and she was darting with swift, short wing-beats to his help.

By the time she arrived the desperate combatants were nearing the shore, though the big fish was still resisting with undiminished vigour, while his captor, though undaunted, was beginning to show signs of With excited cries of Pip-pip, pip-pip, she hovered close above her mate, seeking to strike her eager talons into his opponent's head. But his threshing wings impeded her, and it was some moments before she could accomplish it without hampering his struggles. At last she saw her opportunity, and with a lightning pounce fixed her talons upon the fish's head. They bit deep, and through and through. On the instant his struggles grew feeble, then died away. The exhausted male let go his hold and rose a few yards into the air on heavy wings; while his victorious mate flapped inwards to the beach, half carrying her prey, half dragging it through the water. With a mighty effort she drew it clear up on the silver sand. Then she dropped it and alighted beside it, with one foot firmly clutching it in sign of victory. Her mate promptly landed beside her, whereupon she withdrew her grip, in acknowledgment that the kill was truly his.

After a few minutes' rest, during which the male bird shook and preened his ruffled plumage into order, the pair fell to at the feast, tearing off great fragments of their prey and devouring them hastily, lest the eagle should return, or the eagle's yet more savage mate, and snatch the booty from them. Their object was to reduce it to a size that could be carried home conveniently to the nest. In this they were making swift progress when the banquet was interrupted. A longlimbed woodsman in grey homespun, with a grizzled beard and twinkling grey-blue eyes, and a rifle over his shoulder, came suddenly into close view around a bend of the shore.

The two ospreys left their feast and flapped up into the top of a near-by pine tree. They knew the man, and knew him unoffending as far as they were concerned. He had been a near neighbour ever since their arrival from the south that spring, for his rough shack, roofed with sheets of whitish-yellow birch-bark, stood in full view of their nest and hardly two hundred paces from it.

Furthermore, they were well accustomed to the sight of him in his canoe on the lake, where he was scarcely less assiduous a fisherman than themselves. But they were shy of him, nevertheless, and would not let him watch them at their feeding. They preferred to watch him instead, unafraid and quite unresentful, but mildly curious, as he strolled up to the mangled body of the fish and turned it over with the toe of his moccasined foot.

"Jee-hoshaphat!" * he muttered admiringly. "Who'd ever a' thought them there fish-hawks could a' handled a togue ez big ez that? Some birds!"

He waved a lean and hairy brown hand approvingly at the two ospreys in the pinetop, and then moved on with his loose-jointed stride up through the trees towards his shack. The birds sat watching him impassively, unwilling to resume their feast till he should be out of sight. And the big fish lay glittering in the sun, a staringly conspicuous object on the empty beach.

But other eyes meanwhile—shrewd, savage, greedy eyes—had marked and coveted the alluring prize. The moment the woodsman disappeared around the nearest clump of firs, an immense black bear burst out through the underbrush and came slouching down the beach towards the dead fish. He did not hurry—for who among the wild kindreds would be so bold as to interfere with him, the monarch of the wild?

He was within five or six feet of the prey. Then there was a sudden rush of wind above his head—harsh, rigid wings brushed confusingly across his face—and the torn body of the fish, snatched from under his very nose, was swept into the air. With a squeal of disappointed fury he made a lunge for it, but he was too late. The female osprey, fresher than her mate, had again intervened in time to save the prize, and lifted it beyond his reach.

Now, under ordinary circumstances the bear had no grudge against the ospreys. But this was an insult not to be borne. The fish had been left upon the beach, and he regarded it as his. To be robbed of his prey was the most intolerable of affronts; and there is no beast more tenacious than the bear in avenging any wrong to his personal dignity.

The osprey, weighed down by her heavy burden, flew low and slowly toward the nest.

^{*}It must be understood that this expression is a polite euphemism for the backwoodsman's too vigorous expletive.—C. G. D. R.



"With sharp cries of rage and despair they swooped downwards and dashed madly upon their monstrous foe."

Her mate flew just above her, encouraging her with soft cries of Pip-pip-pip, pip-pip-pip, pip-pip-pip, pip-pip; while the bear galloped lumberingly beneath, his heart swelling with vindictive wrath. Hasten as he would, however, he soon lost sight of them; but he knew very well where the nest was, having seen it many times in his prowlings, so he kept on, chewing his plans for vengeance. He would teach the presumptuous birds that his overlordship of the forest was not lightly to be flouted.

After four or five minutes of clambering over a tangle of rocks and windfalls he arrived at the foot of the naked pine trunk which bore the huge nest in its crotch, nearly fifty feet above the ground. He paused for a moment to glare up at it with wicked eyes. The two ospreys, apparently heedless of his presence and its dreadful menace, were busily tearing fragments of the fish into fine shreds and feeding their hungry nestlings his fish, as the bear told himself, raging at their insolent self-confidence. He would claw the nest to pieces from beneath, and devour both the nestlings themselves and the prey which had been snatched from him. He reared himself against the trunk and began to climb—laboriously, because the trunk was too huge for a good grip, and with a loud rattling of claws upon the dry, resonant wood.

At that first ominous sound the ospreys took alarm. Peering both together over the edge of the nest, they realised at once the appalling peril—a peril beyond anything they had ever dreamed of. With sharp cries of rage and despair they swooped downwards and dashed madly upon their monstrous foe. First one and then the other, and sometimes both together, they struck him,

buffeting him about the face with their wings, stabbing at him in a frenzy with beak and talons. He could not strike back at them, but, on the other hand, they could make little impression upon his tough hide under its dense mat of fur. The utmost they could do was to hamper and delay his progress a little. He shut his eyes and climbed on doggedly, intent upon his vengeance.

The woodsman, approaching his shack, was struck by that chorus of shrill cries, with a note in them which he had never heard before. From where he stood he could see the nest, but not the trunk below it. "Somethin' wrong there!" he muttered, and hurried forward to get a better view. Pushing through a curtain of fir trees he saw the huge black form of the bear, now half-way up the trunk, and the devoted ospreys fighting madly, but in vain, to drive him back. His eyes twinkled with appreciation, and for half a minute or so he stood watching, while that shaggy shape of doom crept slowly upwards. "Some birds, sure, them fish-hawks!" he muttered finally, and raised his rifle.

As the flat crash of the heavy Winchester 38 startled the forest, the bear gave a grunting squawl, hung clawing for a moment, slithered downward a few feet, then fell clear out from the trunk and dropped with a thud upon the rock below. frantic birds darted down after him, heedless of the sound of the rifle, and struck at him again and again. But in a moment or two they perceived that he was no longer anything more than a harmless mass of dead flesh Alighting beside him, they examined him curiously, as if wondering how they had done it. Then, filled with exultation over their victory, they both flew back to the nest and went on feeding their young.

KENSINGTON FAIRIES.

HAVE travelled far to-day, To green glades where children play... Who will say the elves are gone From green and golden Kensington?

Squirrels like grey shadows run 'Neath a drowsy Autumn sun; On the Round Pond galleons grand Sail away to Fairyland.

In the misty shadows deep Pigmy people peer and peep; Who they are I do not know, Light their tread as feet on snow.

Sleepy children, half afraid, Glance adown the darkling glade... Who will say the elves are zone From green and golden Kensington?

R. B. INCE.

THE WAR IN THE TOFOLAKA

By EDGAR WALLACE

Author of "Sanders of the River," "The People of the River," "Bones," "The Keepers of the King's Peace," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN, A.R.A.

THE frontier between the Fongini and the Tofolaka country was delimitated by Nature when she laid the true course of the river which is called by the Tofolaka "Bubukata," meaning "the invisible river," and by the Fongini "the river without water." It is a form of humour in the Fongini country to promise that on a certain date you will wash yourself in the Mala, as they call it. For little water runs here, save a trickle in the rainy season, though there is evidence that at some time or other this was a fierce, strong stream, for the bed lies thirty feet below the level of the plain through which it runs, and this trench is broader than the length of twenty men.

There is a legend of floods in the Fongini country which is analogous to the legend

of the Deluge.

Yet the oldest inhabitant had never seen more water in the Mala than could fill, so to speak, a cooking-pot. The explanation was that its waters were caught higher up the mountain and dammed by the rocks and the sand it brought down, forming a lake which had its overflow in two swift rivers, one that ran into the great river near Hell's Gate, and the other which watered the Kasala country. Once in a hundred years, perhaps, the dam would break under the pressure of a heavy rainfall, and the Mala would exist for a year or two as a veritable river, and so would be until the dam formed again. But no living man had ever seen this wonder, none but the Old Woman.

The Chief of the Fongini came back to his city and saw his fine regiments ready for war. He called the captains of hundreds and the captains of thousands to a palaver which followed the dance of a hundred girls and a great feast.

"We go against the Tofolaka people," said M'lapa, "for that is the word of the

true king, who is a man."

There was an obstinate councillor, who was very aged and had the sourness which

comes so rarely to old people.

"Is this king a true king, chief?" he asked. "For I have not heard that the Old One came down from the mountain and gave him the magic, as is the custom."

"He is true enough for me," replied M'lapa, "for Sandi Ingonda is with him

and is his friend."

"Lord," said the old man loftily, "I know nothing of this Sandi, save the stories which the young men bring me, or of this Bosambo; but I know well the customs of my fathers and their holy superstitions, and I see no king who is not made according to the law."

"Then you see no chief, either," said M'lapa. "And will you stand up at this

fire and say I am not your chief?"

The old one was silent, for he loved life, and there was that look in M'lapa's eye which made him uneasy.

"Lord, you are my chief, and Bosambo is my king," he mumbled, and there was no

more opposition.

"I will take the regiments to the Mala," said M'lapa the chief, "and there we will sit down until word comes from Sandi, or until these dogs of Tofolaka grow warproud."

And in the first light of the morning the

long columns marched westward, and the Tofolaka heard of their coming from the villagers who lived on the other bank of the Mala, and fled in fear of their lives.

The news brought terror to Rimilaka and his councillors, for in their secret hearts they

feared the Fongini.

"This is a bad palaver," said Rimilaka to his daughter Egeni, " and I have a mind to go to Sandi and tell him my sorrow."

"Lord father, you should wait," she said, " for who knows what magic may be brought about? And is not Sandi hated by the Old Woman, who has marked him for death?"

"O ko," mocked her father. "And did not Sandi, who is hated by the Old Woman, put all my beautiful canoes into the river and kill my men by the magic of his big guns, though he is hated by the Old Woman and all devils?"

The remnants of the force he had sent against Rimi-Rimi city were returning, and they did not minimise their perils nor the ferocity of the white man's weapon.

The whole of the Tofolaka people had risen, and spears had come to the gathering-places in greater number than ever before in the history of the country. And the Bubujala folk had sent their fighting regiments, from no love of the Tofolaka, it is true, and rather because they were carrying out the native maxim: "If your neighbour be armed, take your arms and join him."

"Leave me, woman," said Rimilaka at last. "I will let my mind speak with the spirits of dead chiefs, and they shall tell me what to do."

And she left him to make up the excuses which he would offer to Sanders at a meeting which he thought could not long be delayed.

As for Sanders, he was not thinking of the Tofolaka, nor even of the imminence of war, if the truth be told. Whilst the soldiers of the Fongini were marching to the Riverwithout-water, and the very night they halted on the first stage of their journey, he gave a great feast to all the people of Rimi-Rimi. Bones, on the upper bridge, alternately fired off signal rockets to the awe of all beholders, and sent his searchlight in erratic and joyous gyrations to the lowest-lying clouds. Under the deck awning a table was spread amidst festive decorations, for Bones had dug out a Chinese lantern, and the flags of all nations were conspicuously, if inartistically, displayed, Bones being the decorator.

"We will have a bottle on this, Bones," said Sanders, and chuckled.

Bones's eyes brightened.

"I didn't know we had any-" he

"A large bottle of ginger ale," said

Sanders.

"O ko," said Bones dismally. "Dear old Excellency, I thought you were launching forth. Couldn't we have something strong out of the medical stores?"

"Ginger ale," said Sanders, "and even

that will be wildly exhilarating."

Later he raised his glass.

"Here's to Hamilton," he said, "whereever he is, and may he soon return.'

"Cheerio," said Bones. "It's a horrible

drink, but cheerio!"

"I don't quite understand it all," said Sanders. "Surely the fellow who came to steal the pigeon could have brought the note."

Bones nodded wisely.

" Naturally that's a mystery to you, my jolly old Excellency," he said. "Pardon me!" He put his hand convulsively to "Dear old Excellency, ginger his mouth. ale never did agree with me," he apologised. "I can explain the mystery in two ticks. Ham escaped from the cave and is a prisoner in one of the villages. He kidded the jolly old indigenous native that the pigeons were great ju-jus and that he could perform magic. Now, my theory-pardon me," said Bones, "my theory, dear old Sanders, is this-pardon me!"

What Bones's theory was, was not immediately disclosed, for Bosambo came, a large smile bisecting his face and a rich red brocaded gown hanging from his shoulders. "O Sandi," he said, "this is joyful news,

and now my heart is glad."

"Sit down, Bosambo. And since there must be no unhappiness this night, I tell you that I will not inquire too closely about a certain fine curtain which hung at the door of my cabin and which vanished when you

came to see me a moon ago."

"Lord," said Bosambo calmly, and he hitched the brocaded robe so that the place where the curtain rings had been sewn should not show, "these folks of Rimi-Rimi are great thieves, and yesterday I lost a square of beautiful silk, coloured variously with red and blue, which my lord Tibbetti gave to me," he added in some confusion, as he caught Bones's accusing eye.

"You're a naughty, naughty old liar,"

said Bones.

"I be fine fellow," said Bosambo in the same language. "I makeum fine king, same like Matty, Marki, Luki, Johnni."

"O you naughty fellow!" murmured

Bones, shaking his head.

Sanders clapped his hands, and to the servant who came, "Bring beer for the

king," he said.

"In a glass of great size," said Bosambo humbly, "for my hands are so big and clumsy that the little glasses slip and break. And let the glass be filled, Sandi, so that no bad air should get into it.

"Lord," he said suddenly and more seriously, "there is news from the Old

Woman's country."

"What is that, Bosambo?" said Sanders.

"In the days of the Old One," said Bosambo, "there were three great regiments of soldiers who sat about the king's hut and lived in this city. And when you came, and your magic destroyed the Old One, these men went up to the mountain and sat down under the Old Woman's cave, being fearful of white men, and, moreover, doing what is right by their custom; for the Old King's guard has always been the guard of the Devil Woman of Limbi."

"All this I know," said Sanders, nodding.

"What then?"

Bosambo stopped to swallow half the great glass of beer which was put before him,

and to wipe his mouth.

"They move on the city, lord," he said, "and that, I think, is a war palaver, because my spies tell me their faces are streaked with camwood and their shields have been

smoked black."

This was bad news indeed. Sanders had depended in the forthcoming conflict upon the placidity of the Rimi-Rimi people, and had not counted upon any interference by the Old King's guard. They were a considerable body, numbering between four and seven thousand men—it was difficult to get any exact figures, but he judged from what he had observed when he had seen Hamilton enter into the Devil Woman's cave. A thought struck him.

"What of the Devil Woman? Has

Hamilton killed her?"

He put the question to Bosambo, and the

king shook his head.

"Lord, if that were so, who would not know the news? For these people are all ears and are quick to tell. More than this, they come in the Old Woman's name, as I know."

"She has sent them?" asked Sanders, and Bosambo nodded.

"They are commanded by Okaso, who is a big captain of the guard, and they tell me he is a very cunning man."

"You could not hold the city?" asked

Sanders, after a while.

Bosambo looked at him earnestly.

"Lord, if you say to me, 'Hold this place,' I will do so with eighty men, and hold it until I die, knowing your lordship will be very gentle and generous to Fitema, my wife. Eighty men I have and no more; they are my own Ochori warriors. As for the townsmen, they do not fight, for townsmen are made only as meat for the fighting men of the country, and have no other use."

"And this I have done, lord," he added. "I have sent word to Fitema, who is very

clever--"

"Sent her word?" said Sanders in

astonishment.

"I also brought the grey ones who moan," said Bosambo, "and one of these I have flown." He seemed at a loss as to how he should proceed.

"What was the message you sent?"

"Lord, I told her that we were for a great and terrible war, for then I did not know which way the Fongini would go."

Sanders was silent.

"The Territories are settled," he said, thinking of his old country, "and they will not grow reckless because of a war here. But I think they are glad that the Old King is dead, because he had made secret plans to come down into the Ochori and upon the Akasava and eat them up. Therefore, Bosambo, my friend, you did well."

Bosambo did not tell him how well he had done, for the letter he had painfully composed, and which had been addressed to

"Fitema with the eyes of doves and the soft voice of gentle winds," did not underestimate the peril. Therefore the war lokali of the Ochori had drummed frantically, and messengers had gone south and west to the Akasava, to the N'gombi, to the Isisi, to all save the bushmen, who had no kindness. And the lower river was a-quiver with excitement, canoes coming and going, not singly, but in fleets. Armed men trailed through the forest, singing their songs of battle, and war fires were burning from the upper Ochori to the sea.

The villages were deserted on both banks of the river for a hundred and fifty miles, save for the women and the old men, and in the Ochori country, along the great,

broad road which Bosambo had built with forced labour, an endless column trailed like a column of soldiers northward and ever northward, and at their head, borne on a litter which was carried by eight men, the thin brown woman Fitema, her husband's spear of chieftainship in her hand.

Sanders spent an uneasy half-hour thinking of the possible complications which would follow Bosambo's note of alarm if it were acted upon. The Territories just then were without a Commissioner, and only a subordinate officer was in control. Whatever doubt he had upon the matter was shifted to another angle when, in the middle of the night, they woke him with the news.

The Mala river—that river without water which divided the Territories-was in spate. There had been a burst somewhere in the mountains, and between the armies of the Fongini and the Tofolaka was a broad, impassable stream which they could not pass for ten days.

Sanders took the news along to Bones.

"This is bad," said Bones. "Rimilaka will not lose such an opportunity."

"He hasn't," said Sanders grimly. "His war fires are burning, and he's gathering a fleet for the invasion of Rimi-Rimi."

Sanders was sending his sergeant to arouse Bosambo and bring him to the ship, when that alert man anticipated his wishes. They heard his voice hailing them from the water, and presently he was aboard, and Sanders saw that he was dressed for war.

He had not come alone, for with him was a warrior in the paraphernalia of the

king's guard.

"Lord, I bring this man to you," said Bosambo. "He came to my hut at midnight, and I have made a long palaver with

"Who is he?" asked Sanders.

"This man is Okaso, of the king's guard,

and, lord, he desires to serve you.

"So I think," said Sanders sarcastically. " Tell me, Okaso, do you desire to serve me as you served the lord Militini, whom you pushed into the cave of the Old One?"

"Master, if you speak of Amatini," said the man calmly, "that was an order. And how should a soldier do if one say to him 'Do this,' and he think on the right or wrong of it? But now I come to serve you by the Old Woman's orders."

"To serve me by the Old Woman's orders?" repeated Sanders incredulously. "O ko, this is strange, for I wish no favour

of the Old Woman. And in what way can

you serve me, soldier?"

"Lord, I bring with me many thousand spears, being three regiments, all well commanded and hot for fighting.'

This was staggering news.

"How do I know this is not a cunning thing you do, Okaso?" he said. "For when you are mixed with my soldiers, could you not turn and destroy them?"

"Of that I have thought," said Okaso, " and I have brought with me my favourite wife and my three children, who shall sit upon your fine ship and be blood for you if

I betray you."

The man was obviously sincere—so sincere that Bones, who saw a trap in everything, was impressed.

"Why does she do this, the Old Woman who hates me and has marked me for

death?" asked Sanders.

"Lord, she hates the Tofolaka worse, I think," said Okaso, "because they set up a witch who spoke devilish words about Her Holiness."

So the Old Woman was alive. Hamilton was alive, too, and half the malignity in Sanders's heart against this terrible power vanished with the knowledge

of his friend's welfare.

"I will trust you, Okaso," he said. "Yet you shall bring your woman and your three children on board, and be sure I will have no softness in my heart for them if you betray me. To-morrow morning you shall take your canoes and fasten them, the nose of one to the end of another, in a long line, and I will fasten the first by a rope to my ship, and you shall go down the river with magical speed and without labour."

"Are you going to the Tofolaka?" said Bones in English, and Sanders nodded.

"Yes," he said quietly, "I am going to the village of Tonkini, where Hamilton expects to meet me. It couldn't have been chosen better for my purpose. From that landing I can throw a force into the heart of Tofolaka, which will bring the main body of Rimilaka's forces back. Incidentally, it will give the Fongini people time to bridge the river. "Although I am not a soldier," he said, "I believe that to carry the war into your enemy's country is a favourite plan of all the great strategists."

"You're right," said the enthusiastic Bones. "Dear old Excellency, you're absolutely right! That is my idea!"

"As for you, Bosambo," said Sanders. you will come with me on the Zaire, and



""Behold Fitema, who is my wife, and who raised the people of the Lower River for our help!"

I think there'll be enough fighting for all of us."

Before daybreak the Zaire steamed down stream, and behind her trailed more canoes in one line than any of the people of Rimi-Rimi had ever seen; and in each canoe sat twelve delighted men of the king's guard, who found their canoes moving without any effort on their part, and that was pleasing, because soldiers do not like work.

They came to the village of Tonkini at noon, having travelled considerably over a hundred miles in seven hours, and they landed without opposition. Okaso, who was a skilled captain, threw out a screen of skirmishers without finding his enemy in force, though one village showed fight and was taken and burnt.

The country hereabouts was open.

They were in the foot-hills of the Ghost Mountain, and within twenty miles of the path which led to the Ochori country. To secure this path was Sanders's first consideration, and he sent forward a third of his force to establish themselves in the country to the other side of the road; but Rimilaka had heard news in the night, and, what was more important, had a large force within striking distance of the mountain; and scarcely had the Old King's guard reached their post when Rimilaka struck with five thousand spears, and threw the invaders back half-way to their base.

Bosambo saw the danger, and went forward at the head of two regiments, striking at a point where he guessed the right of Rimilaka's spears would rest. The manœuvre was only partially successful, because the greater portion of Rimilaka's force was now in movement; and though Bosambo reached the enemy's flank and turned it, he had to retire, leaving a considerable portion of his force upon the ground.

"Lord, I think it is not well," he said. He had come back to Sanders, bleeding from a wound in his shoulder and very tired. This

tiredness he explained simply.

"I carried back Okaso, who is hurt with a spear in the chest, and will die if it is the will of God. But I think this fight is worth all, because the men called me king as they went into battle. So also did Osako, else," he added naïvely, "I would have left him to be chopped."

Osako's injuries were not as serious as Bosambo thought, but quite bad enough, as Sanders saw when he dressed the wound.

"You shall go on board my ship, Osako," he said, "and I think you will live."

"It is a terribly strange thing you do, lord," said the fighting captain, "saving those who are hurt to death."

"That is the way of the new king," said

Sanders, "and the law he brings."

He had his mind occupied for the next Rimilaka was attacking in full strength, and once broke through the locked line and would have brought about disaster but for an opportune machine-gun

post which Bones had sited.

It was late in the afternoon when Rimilaka delivered his third and most serious blow, and Sanders guessed that every warrior the Tofolaka could muster was attacking. The defensive line gave in waves, and it seemed that the end was at hand. Then Bosambo led his eighty warriors into a crucial gap, and for a moment defeat was ${f averted}$.

Sanders sent for Bones, and, handing over his machine-gun to his sergeant, Captain

Tibbetts reported.

"If we bolt before this crowd, we're probably finished in this country," Sanders; "and if we don't bolt, we're certainly finished. Have the launch ready, and a full head of steam in the Zaire."

The belt of land his force was holding was scarcely a mile wide, and behind the warriors was no retreat but the river and their canoes. Rimilaka saw the fight from a hill near by. " Now," he said exultantly, " my day has come, and I shall be king of this land."

He called a grey-haired chief to him.

"Go now and tell my captains to make an end," he said, "for I see that Sandi's soldiers are weak, and if we run quickly, our enemies will not reach his boat.

The old man carried his message and then edged his way into the struggling line,

where he was killed.

And then, when it seemed that nothing could save Sanders and his party, when the line was wavering and only a pitiful remnant of the king's guard was fighting, and that for its life, Rimilaka turned his head and saw an immense army behind They were pouring down the hill through the narrow road which led to the Ochori-Akasava and N'gombi and Ochori, thousands of yellow shields and flashing spear-tops.

"My daughter," he stammered, "how is

He was trembling like a leaf.

"I think these are foreigners," she said huskily.

"You have made me a dead man," said

Rimilaka, and stabbed her between the shoulders with his killing spear.

Then he went down to meet the new

enemy, and died.

From where he stood, Sanders could not see what was happening-only what appeared to be an inevitably successful enemy was giving way and running in groups, and from far away came the crash of shields and the hoarse shouts of men.

"O Bosambo," he called, "what

" Now, God knows," said Bosambo, " but I think that this is an answer to the prayers which I have addressed to various

gods."

He went forward and met none of the enemy, and then he raised a great shout, for he had recognised the shields of the company which was coming toward him at a run. He stopped and threw out his arms to them, and the shields opened and a woman came out -- a woman very beautiful in Bosambo's eyes.

When he returned, bleeding and dusty, to Sanders, he carried the woman sitting on

his shoulder.

"Lord," he said, "behold Fitema, who is my wife, and who raised the People of the Lower River for our help!"

Sanders put out his hands with a smile

and lifted the woman down.

"I see that you are as good a queen for these people, Fitema, as Bosambo is king," he said, "and the soft places of the Ochori are not for you."

"Lord, that is true," she said. "Here I come to stay with my man, and my two fine sons will follow me. O Bosambo, why

do you dance?"

Bosambo had stuck his spear head down in the ground and was making little steps about it, performing the dance of the Kroo people, shuffling his feet and slapping his thighs, and as he danced he sang:

"I am the king of this land, and Fitema is my true wife. I am a follower of the Prophet and of other saints and holy ones,

Sanders left him to his joy and to the ecstatic girl, and went on to the ship.

"I think this finishes our work, Bones," said Sanders brusquely. "There has been no sign of Hamilton-that is the only thing which is worrying me now."

"Not a sign," said Bones irritably.

Sanders bit his lip.

"It is queer," he said, "but I suppose we mustn't be particular to an hour or two. He only told us to be here, and he did not

specify the hour he would come."

"Of course not," said Bones. His anxiety showed in his voice. "Naturally, dear old Commissioner, we can't expect him to run to time-table." He changed the subject with a question.

'Yes," answered Sanders, "the casualties are rather heavy, but we've settled the Tofolaka, and they will remember this

battle for many a day."

"There are still two regiments," said

"I doubt it," said Sanders, with a smile. "You mean the two regiments which are waiting on the banks of the Mala? According to the rumour I got just before I came aboard—and these rumours are mostly right—the Fongini are already across the river, and I do not think the Tofolaka people will trouble us again.'

He turned and dropped his hands on Bones's shoulders and shook him gently.

"Bones, I know a better place than this country, and by this and by that, when I have settled Bosambo firmly, I am going there."

"Yes," said Bones, but with no great

It was no use trying to make conversation; now that the strain of the battle was removed, they found that a heavier burden rested on them. Night came, and still no sign of Hamilton. They kept the searchlights playing on the river throughout the night, and the morning found them tired and irritable. News had come of the Fongini. They had indeed crossed the river, and the two regiments which had opposed them were no more. Sanders sent a message to the Fongini chief, telling him to hold his men, and was satisfied that his orders would be obeyed. He knew instinctively that his mission was accomplished, and that the solution he had sought had been found.

Bosambo, in a more sober mood, brought a startling estimate of the total losses. Rimilaka's body had been found, also the

body of his daughter.

"Lord, had I found her alive," said the gentle Fitema, "she would have died slowly, but my man is very gentle with

women, as all men know."

"You weary me with praise," said the smug Bosambo. "Yet you have not told our lord how kind I was to the widow of the Akasava man whom I drowned, or how I brought the little children of Kesemi into the hut of my headman because I slew him,'

"I remember that palaver, Bosambo," said Sanders, a little twinkle in his eye. "Your headman came to me and com-

plained of your generosity."

"Lord, he was a dog," said Bosambo. "Look!" he yelled. He pointed up the river. In the very centre was a canoe, and it was paddled by a man in a tattered white

Sanders raised his glasses and gasped— " Hamilton!"

Hamilton was paddling furiously. Now and again he looked over his shoulder, but there was nothing in sight, and it seemed that he kept to the centre of the river so that he might see behind him, for hereabouts the great river runs in a succession of curls. With a sweep of his paddle he came alongside, and Sanders gripped him by the arms and hauled him

"My dear fellow-" he said brokenly,

and then could say no more.

It was an exceedingly clean-looking Hamilton, though his face was pale. His clothes were in tatters and his hair was unusually long. For a moment he could not speak, and then he caught Sanders's arm and gently pushed him aside.
"Guns!" he said thickly, and, running

to where the Hotchkiss stood, he slipped open the breech and threw in a shell.

There was nothing in sight, and for a moment Sanders thought that Hamilton's brain was affected; but it was only for a moment, for round the bend swept a single canoe, and behind twenty others in a line.

The first canoe was at least fifty yards ahead of those that followed, and it carried one paddler. Again Sanders fixed his glasses, and nearly dropped them, for he recognised the straw coat and the curious birdcage head-dress.

"The Woman of Limbi!" he cried.

Behind him was a rifle rack, and he pulled down a sporting Lee-Metford and slipped in a cartridge from the magazine.

What are you going to do?"

It was Hamilton, and his voice was strained.

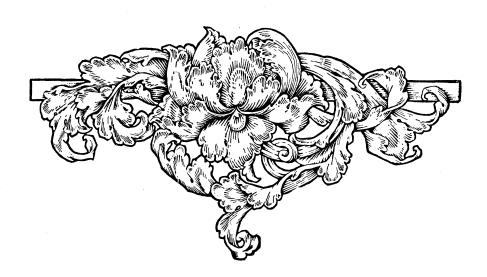
I'm going to rid this country of its last menace," said Sanders, "and I rather fancy that I shall not miss her."

"Miss whom?" said Hamilton.

"The Old Woman of Limbi," said Sanders, and as he fired, Hamilton knocked up his gun.

"Sanders," he said breathlessly, "Sanders -she is my wife! If you must shoot, shoot the devils who are following her!"

A further story in this series will appear in the next number.



LIFE WORK

B_v I. C. HOWARD

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

IMOTHY MINNS was a bookmaker. He declared that he must have an interest in life, and that one hobby was as good as another. In the course of a roving and adventurous life he had amassed a considerable fortune. This he was employing for the education and general welfare of his daughter Therese. And while the two idolised one another, they had a perpetual bone of contention in Timothy Minns's bookmaking proclivities.

"My Tess," old Minns would say to me, "declares that my bookmaking is disreputable. She says I don't need the money. I don't; but it's a habit and a

hobby."

Minns made a penny book in the vague days when he went to school in the Borough. He booked bets at sea. In the Andaman Isles, when they waited weeks for a result, he booked bets and waited.

"And if," said he, "as Tess declares, I ought not to do it-well, let her find me a hobby as interesting and as fascinating, and

I'll substitute one for the other."

Now, I had met Minns originally over betting transactions, and had become his friend because I liked him as a man. And when I returned from the War, I went at once to call on him, and incidentally to see his daughter. For sundry passages in letters from Therese, as well as fleeting glimpses of her on "leaves," had left me with the strongest inclination to come to a definite understanding with Therese right away.

I arrived in the middle of an extra fierce altercation concerning Timothy Minns's bookmaking. "He's worse than ever," declared Therese, after a hurried greeting to me, "and, what's more, he's deceitful. He doesn't use the telephone here any more, but he has what he calls an S.P. office, and has a small army of seedy-looking loafers who collect ready money for him in bars and

billiard-rooms."

She forced back her tears with difficulty. "Can't you talk to him, Tony?" she begged. "Can't you get him to see that a man in the position he has made for himself ought not to exercise such a trade?"

I spoke of other things to Minns and to her. How could I, as an old client, dictate to Minns? But when, a little later, I said "Good night" to Therese at the gate, I unhesitatingly expressed my willingness to

be her ally in the matter.

I was glad at least to have a secret in common with Therese; I felt it brought us closer together. And we used to discuss the subject and other things almost nightly at the garden-gate. I was beginning to think things were going very nicely indeed, when old Minns suddenly put his fcot

Said he one evening, over a whisky and a pipe, and in the absence of Therese on some domestic errand: "I've wanted to speak to you, Tony, my lad, for some weeks. If you come here to see me, and have a chat and a drink, it's all right. If, as I rather fancy, you're after Therese, it's no go. You're too old."

"At thirty-three!" I exclaimed, giving

my case away.

"And you have all your way to make," added Minns solemnly. "I have brought up that girl in luxury. She's fitted by training and education to be the wife of a Cabinet Minister. She's a beauty. She has character. She will be one of the most lovable wives in the world. Now, if you had put into a steady business the years you have spent in the War-mind you, I'm not saying you could have stopped at home, but there it is —if you could have gone straight ahead, you might have thought of her. As it is, she spends, I dare say, the amount of your month's salary on a couple of flimsy dresses, and thinks nothing about it. My girl isn't going short."

"But I'm doing quite well," I protested. "Not well enough," declared Minns doggedly. "You are only starting again now. As you stand, you would hardly be able to marry her and maintain her properly for ten years. You must give up the idea.

I like you, Tony, and I'm sorry, but that's

"Can I ask her what she thinks about it?"

"No, Tony, you can't. Not with my permission, anyhow. And she isn't twentyone yet."

I rose to leave. Minns made no movement

to shake hands with me.

that unless I $_{
m make}$ money quickly-" I hazarded.

"Ah, that," said Minns, "might make a

lot of difference!"

Whereupon I left him and walked somewhat dejectedly home. I could no longer call at the house with honesty to myself or Minns. And it was some weeks before I met Therese by the purest accident. I was in Regent Street, on my firm's business, when she stood suddenly before me in a shop doorway.

"Why, Tony," she cried, "you've

deserted us!"

I coughed awkwardly.

"Your father and I had a little difference,"

She laughed knowingly.

"About his bookmaking," I added hastily.

Therese shook her finger at me.

"Tony, Tony," she punctuated, with laughing eyes, "you're telling lies!"
"But really——" I asserted.

"Oh, very well," she returned, somewhat stiffly. And then: "Could you get me a taxi? I want to go home."

I rushed to do her bidding, put her inside, giving her address to the driver.

motioned him to wait.

"Tony," she said softly through the window, "I know what your difference was about. It simply means "—her roguish eyes laughed merrify—" that I have two points at difference with Dad instead of one."

I almost jumped through the window. "And those are bookmaking and---"

But, with a wave of her hand to the

driver, she was gone.

Well, can you blame me if I wrote to her and asked her to see me, imploring her to meet me anywhere she liked at any time? And Therese replied by return that she would be in Kensington Gardens at three on the Saturday afternoon

And that was where Tess and I came to a thorough understanding. Tess laughed suddenly and pouted prettily. "The wonder," she said musingly, "the wonder is that Dad waited so long. You know you were always such an unconscionable time saying 'Good night.' And the way you used to look at me indoors! A girl always guesses, you see."

"Always?"

"I have had no previous experience myself, sir," said Therese.

"Then how do you know?" I asked.

"Don't let's talk rubbish," she said, to change the subject. "What are we going to do?"

I shook my head hopelessly.

Tess frowned a little. "A girl practically proposes to marry you, and you shake your head and say you don't know how to manage it "

"Your father's right, in a way," said I.

"You've got brains," declared Tess. I bowed. "But they're not very market-

able," "Who wants you to sell them? Think, Tony, think! That is, of course, if you care——" And here I interrupted her of necessity. For if Kensington Gardens is too public to be demonstrative in, one has to assert one's self sometimes.

"It's up to you, Tony," she said, when calm was restored. "If you like, I'll marry you the day I'm twenty-one, and patch up things with Dad afterwards. But I'd rather you made good, if you can."

"And I swear," I returned hotly, "that I will make good, and that I won't marry you till I do."

"Oh, Tony, Tony, don't! Don't swear anything. You can't be sure. Don't promise

rashly.''

"And, what is more," I went on, "I'll cure your father of bookmaking, too.

"But how?" she questioned.

"Oh, leave it to me!"

"But you have no definite plan."

"I have a ghost of an idea.

"Oh, Tony, Tony! And you've taken an oath! You are simply asking for ill-fortune for the pair of us. If only you had qualified it, said 'Touching wood,' or something like that!" Tess looked distressed even to tears.

"It's really dreadful to swear to things like that unless you know, and even then-What can we do? Wait," she said, "and felt anxiously in her handbag. "Yes, I've got it-my lucky threepenny bit. Have you any lucky coin, charm, anything in the mascot way, Tony?"

I produced a sixpence. "Do you want it

very much?" I queried.

"You simply must part with it," she declared. "We're going to make a sacrifice to wipe away your rash swearing. I'm going to throw these into the pond." That the sacrifice might not lack ceremony, we advanced slowly across the grass side by Tess held the coins outstretched on her open palm. "When we get to the pond," she declared, "I'm going to turn round three times, and then I'm going to hurl-" We stopped suddenly. A ragged urchin was staring fixedly at her extended hand with the bright silver coins in it.

The child didn't ask. He just looked fixedly and coveted. The same thought came to each of us, and I caught Tess's

glance.

"My little man," said I, "shut your eyes." The urchin obeyed.

"Hold out your hand. He stood, tiny hand extended. And Tess muttered an impromptu incantation and placed the coins in his palm. He opened his eyes again, gave one howl of happiness, and scuttered away down the nearest pathway to the gates.

The rest of the afternoon belongs to me and Tess, and wouldn't interest anybody.

I ASKED my firm for a holiday on urgent private affairs. I had decided, in any case, to risk it. To my surprise, it was accorded without difficulty, in lieu, of course, of a holiday to which I would be entitled in the ordinary course. And I set out-of all places where a man might not want to gofor Boltham, in Lancashire. I proposed to speculate in mill shares.

In that enterprising town of cotton, where at this period fortunes were made and lost with a rapidity and nonchalance hardly ever equalled elsewhere, I put up at the "George Hotel" facing the Town Hall. And that evening I dropped right into it. The commercial room of the "George" was a miniature Stock Exchange. With the difference that the buyers and sellers wore cloth caps and ill-cut though serviceable clothes, one might have been in a silkhatted, frock-coated share market in any metropolis of the world.

On a strong tip from a fraternity of sporting gentlemen, also residents in the hotel, I bought five hundred Higginshaw Mills Limited ten-shilling shares at five shillings and ninepence, and was somewhat surprised to find that I must pay on the spot or lose the deal. I had, however, a letter of credit on a Boltham bank, and suggested

a cheque. "Ay, that'll do," said one of my aiders

and abettors. "It's a reet 'un, I suppose,

I explained that it would be met in two days' time.

'Aw'le back it for thee," said a second

sportsman.

"Tha'll be pinched, if it isn't," said a third. And my cheque changed hands.

I did not see any of my friends at breakfast, but at lunch-time next day I found a merry crowd cracking bottles of champagne, and was surprised to hear that they had each and all sold out their holdings in Higginshaw Mills Limited at fourteen shillings and threepence a share.

"And should I have sold already?" I

asked, aghast.

They turned and shouted at me.

"What?" they cried. "D'ye mean to say you didn't know enough for that?'

I was beginning to be alarmed. "Am I—am I too late?" I asked.

They all laughed together.

"You might get two and sixpence for them," said one sympathiser.

"But who's buying?" I hazarded.

"Why, London fellars who've heard of a cotton boom and want to get in."

"But aren't they worth their price?" "What-Old Man Higginshaw's Mills? Shoddy calicoes and prints for India. Why, they're the laughing-stock of Lancashire! A hearty, red-faced fellow, who told me that ten weeks before he was a butcher in quite a small way of business, took me aside and suggested that if I could give him the voucher for my holding, that he would run out and get me the best price he could.

I looked questioningly at a neighbour who was watching us both. "Go on, Softie," said this gentleman. "Joe's all right, and he'll sell where they wouldn't listen to you."

Now, my friend Joe got three shillings per share for my holding, and as I had paid five shillings and ninepence the day before, I lost about sixty-eight pounds over the transaction.

On a tip from another man, I made forty pounds odd the following day. I then proceeded to lose one hundred and twenty pounds in twenty-four hours. Apparently I was doing no good whatever.

I took to frequenting their temporary Share Market, which was in a disused public dancing-hall. Day after day I joined their mid-day and evening reunions, their phrenetic speculations, their hearty, noisy celebrations of rapid gain. Over a game of snooker-pool in the billiard-room I nodded away two hundred pounds of my capital, and I felt every nerve in my body tighten as, to the roar of a sing-song in the outer bar, I waited for news of my latest and biggest venture. I found myself in a cold sweat of relief on estimating a gain of nearly three hundred pounds. In the cigar-smoke-filled corridors I jostled scarf-clad emissaries only too anxious to help me to rapid fortune or even more rapid ruin in a few hours, and I dealt with them in varying chance and mischance.

One Friday night I went to bedhaving consumed a great deal more whisky I would return to Town and see Tess. I hated to acknowledge failure, but there was little else to be done. I had written to her, of course, and told her that I was feeling my way to speculation in cotton. Her replies were encouraging, but full of exhortations to caution. "Remember that rash oath of yours," she wrote me. Could I forget it? And I thought, too, of our pathetic little attempt to avert ill-fortune by sacrifice. Alas, poor, lucky, unlucky, sixpence! Poor little threepenny bit! But at least we had made that youngster happy for an hour.

In a very chastened mood I arose to an



"Hugging his prize and happy beyond measure."

than I cared about—thoroughly tired in body and mind, and utterly downcast and broken-spirited at the total failure of my plans. I had not actually lost money, but, as I lay through the long hours of early daylight, I knew that I had been attempting the impossible.

So, to the scream of the hooters that summoned the workers to the mill, to the clatter of their clogs on the pavement, and the rattle of the early cars down Yorkshire Street, I made up my mind definitely and for all that, boom or no boom, there was no fortune in mill shares for me.

early and solitary breakfast I proposed to take an afternoon train from Manchester. In the meantime I strolled musingly across the square and inspected a handsome church. Its graveyard, with age-old inscriptions, held me for a time, and then I descended the steep hill of Yorkshire Street to the railway bridge at the bottom, and came across my destiny.

Thoughts of Tess and our adventure of Kensington Gardens made me take a particular interest in a little boy of ten. He was not particularly ill-dressed, but from the way in which he glued his eyes to the window



"And I turned away with a laugh, to find my merriment reflected in the mild, kindly eyes of an elderly gentleman."

of a pastry-shop I argued he must be hungry. So I took the bull by the horns and asked him what he would like. My younster did not hesitate a moment. He pointed hungrily to a ginger-bread man standing appetisingly in the forefront of the window, and I led him in and bought it for him. Did he want anything else? Apparently not. But he had spent the morning coveting this particularly enticing and toothsome masterpiece. Wherefore we came out together, the child

hugging his prize and happy beyond measure. And I turned away with a laugh to find my merriment reflected in the mild, kindly eyes of an elderly gentleman who had evidently seen the whole incident. The stranger advanced to meet me with an air that charmed at once. "May I felicitate you on a happy and kindly act?" said he. "It is not often that so young a man has learned to think so much of others."

"I was simply amusing myself," I

"It is so very easy to bring happiness to a child like that.'

"That's just the point," he returned.

" But do you often see it done?"

"But I don't even know," said I, "if my gift was well-advised."

"Not a bit of it," he asseverated stoutly.
"He is the happier, and so are you. Are you staying at the 'George'?" he asked.

"Why, yes."

"I have seen you there," he said, "with rather a gambling crowd. I am staying there, too. And if you would care to have lunch with me, I should like to make your better acquaintance." His invitation was so kindly proffered, and, indeed, the old man's personality was so engaging, that I consented with alacrity.

"My name," he said, "is Wainwright. Anyone in this town will tell you I am an exceptionally wealthy man. Perhaps I am," he added whimsically. "Perhaps, again, I am not. I have done my best not to be."

We were re-entering the "George," and I

stopped to stare at him.

"You mean—precisely?" I questioned.
"Something of the kind that you were doing when I met you," he replied, "but on a greater scale, perhaps. However, it all comes back. I find that, whether I want it or not, I am continually making money, which I try to spend in—shall we say ? indiscriminate and haphazard charities.

He ordered an excellent luncheon.

"Your name is, I believe, Lockton?" he asked.
"Anthony Lockton, sir," said I.

The old gentleman smilingly poured me a glass of wine, which I drank to his continued

"To our first meeting," said he. "And I am very pleased to make your acquaintance. Do you know," declared Mr. Wainwright reflectively, "I have been wanting to know you all the week. Thatthat gambling crowd is of no use to you. Do you mind my asking if you have lost money?"

I told him how a succession of deals had

very nearly balanced each other.

"You are well out of it," he declared. "But," he continued, looking at me closely, yet kindly, "why do you want to join in this speculation at all? You are a young man of education. I presume that you are reasonably off. You probably have a profession or a business occupation. Why this desire to get rich quickly? Does not your own life satisfy you?"

I hesitated and perhaps flushed a little. "It is such a ridiculous story," said I.

"I have," declared Wainwright,

object in asking you."

So I told him of Minns and his ultimatum, and of Therese and my own high hopes, now so ruthlessly swept away.

And the old man laughed and nodded comprehendingly, with a twinkle in his kindly grey eyes. I even told him of the bookmaking difficulty, and he laughed again.

"Would you care," he said thoughtfully, "would you care to listen to a proposal I can make to you? You will find, on inquiry, that I am a wealthy man. I am at the present time making what would seem to some people enormous sums of money every day. No"—he said quickly, in answer to an attempted observation from me, " no, I do not propose to make you a gift of money, and I know perfectly well that you would not accept. But I can take some or all of your capital, and show you how, in conjunction with me, you can make money easily, rapidly, and with absolute certainty."

The proposal simply took my breath away. So utterly unexpected and unsought as it was, it was well calculated to arouse a glimmer of suspicion. And I wondered.

Was this the latest and ultimate form of the oldest confidence trick in the world. Old Wainwright flushed angrily and, think-

ing better of it, laughed again.

You're quite right, Mr. Lockton," said "It didn't strike me like that at first. But you needn't be afraid. I particularly want to help you on two accounts. First, because I like you; and, secondly, for a far greater and more important reason."

He rose from the table.
"Can you," he asked, "and would you care to give me your afternoon? I would like to show you-this town and some things it contains. Will you come with me?"

I could hardly refuse. Moreover, I liked and respected this genial veteran who could take so kindly an interest in an utter stranger. So we left the hotel together.

"I want to show you," said he thoughtfully, "some few aspects of the wealth and poverty of these great cotton towns. I own in this district alone some half-dozen mills, and must employ ten thousand handsmen, women, and, until lately, children. Many of them are in these jostling crowds."

It was Saturday afternoon, and the clanging, crowded electric cars found a difficult pathway through the crowd of men and boys that walked the middle of the street. "That huge crowd and the folk that pack the cars are making for the local football ground. It is a good and happy thing. So they find fresh air, and, God knows, they need it! Their wives and daughters are here." He indicated the long lines of shops, where clogs and shawl elbowed hat and mantle in the marketing.

He turned suddenly to the left and up a steep hill. Pausing in front of a tiny door in a long blank wall, he opened it with a key and we went in. "This mill belongs to me," said Wainwright. "Let us look over it."

We mounted a steep flight of stairs and entered a long weaving-shed, where gaunt frames stood silent in the afternoon sunlight. "Fine cotton for spinning," he explained, "and subject to the smallest change in temperature and humidity. We can never open a window, and, as you will remark, the air is close, hot, and uncomfortable. My people spend their lives in this atmosphere." He took me over to a frame and pointed beneath it. "Do you see the lower edge of that frame?" he asked. I nodded. "Do you realise that until lately they used to send children under that frame with the machinery in motion? It cost the operator a few pence to stop the machine, and the frame had to be cleaned. Little girls' hair used to get caught by the moving frame, lifting the entire scalp. Result, softening of the brain, blindness, and sometimes an early death. I used my great wealth, power, and position to abolish that very thing—to reduce child labour to a minimum and, in time, to eliminate it altogether. That is the kind of thing I am trying to do. And that is why I remain in cotton. I am trying to make these peoples' lives worth living. They have, of course, dining and recreation rooms, clubs in connection with the works, and every other obvious thing like that that I can contrive. I wanted to pay higher wages and shorten working hours, but I am up against their own Unions. I give bonuses quarterly instead. The Employers' Federation consider me a criminal lunatic, who would destroy the trade, which is, of course, nonsense. The trade is the livelihood of the people. Must they not live?" raised his arms passionately above his head and let them drop with a gesture of despair. "Come and see where my people live," said he, "and how they live."

We went together through street after street of uniform four-roomed houses.

"These are the best," said Wainwright.

"I want you to see the other sort." And we entered different streets altogether. Ragged children were playing in the roadway, idly surveyed by slatternly women on the doorsteps. In long lines of closely packed houses every front door led to a living-room, and that door was open to the street. One long row faced a stinking stream that manufacture had stained a yellow brown. turned into narrow courts, where yet poorer houses seemed to crowd away every breath of air and sunshine, and we emerged finally through narrow entries and alleyways into a main street once more.

"And that," said my friend, "that is what they get out of it. That is where their lives lead to. Do you wonder that they grow up undersized, puny, narrow-chested,

" And if you visit the hydros of Blackpool, Harrogate, Scarborough, Cleethorpes; if you frequent the hotels in Manchester, Liverpool, and the like, you will find the delicately nurtured women who live in a refinement and luxury which is an unconscious exploitation of the poverty and wretchedness of these thousands who provide great fortunes which they do not share.

"Now, I am neither Anarchist nor fireeater. I have no wild dream of equality for all. I am but one man. I cannot take and remould this thing. I can and am actually pressing for legislation and reform. And in the meantime I take here and there the entire charge of an ailing child, and send it to God's sunshine by the sea. I look for consumptive boys and girls, young mothers that droop and die in these narrow streets, and I take them away for a time at least. It is my life-work and my delight. Dozens of pitiful cases come before me every day. I can only take the worst. It is a rank injustice to the other eleven whom I have not the means to care for. But should I do well to do nothing for the one because I cannot take them all?

"I never appear. I work through half-adozen London solicitors, but the work is there. Some tiny fraction of humanity is the happier. Is it not worth while?"

He ceased abruptly. We were almost outside the "George," and he took my arm

and led me indoors.

"And now, Mr. Lockton," he said very earnestly. "I come to my point. I am getting an old man. I need a more active helper. I can, as I told you before, take your capital and quintuple it. I can make

you a rich man in a very little while. Money makes money, and I am almost overburdened with it. But I am obliged to make larger and ever larger sums to cope with my ever-increasing promiscuous charities.

"Frankly, straightly, and as man to

man, will you come in with me?"

III.

One week later I sat with George Wainwright in his London office. He was no longer the kindly, mild-eyed guide who had shown me the underworld of cotton, but a brisk, alert man of business controlling an army of hurrying clerks and messengers. To the ringing of telephone bells and the rattle of the typewriters I sat excitedly watching the clicking tape machine that gave a constant succession of figures from the exchanges of the world-German marks, Austrian kröner, Italian lire, French, Swiss, and Belgian francs, dollars, pesetas, roubles, rupees, yen, every coinage of the world. And every tiny fluctuation in exchange meant to us a sale or purchase of world The whole gigantic system lay before me—the agents in every country in the world, the constant cables, the complicated mass of tiny differences capable of swiftly seized advantage. And towering above it, George Wainwright, with a finger on every pulse and tremor, directing, buying, selling, signing, putting hour after hour a

steady flow of gain to my credit and his own.

I had watched my little seven hundred capital grow to a thousand; it was now approaching three.

Ten days later it was ten thousand, and in one month's time my little capital had

become sixty thousand pounds.

"Will you stop there?" said Wainwright, turning wearily in his chair.

"Why, yes," said I.

"You want to get off and marry Theree?" he said, his eyes twinkling.

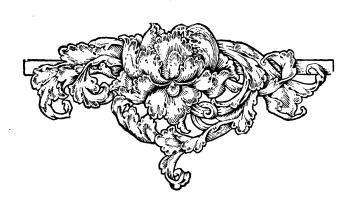
I nodded, and we shook hands silently.
"I will give you," said Wainwright, "one wouth's holiday for your honeymoon, and

month's holiday for your honeymoon, and then you must come to me. Tiny little souls are dying in squalid courts; there is want and dirt and misery of which we can assuage so very small a fraction. We have work to do, Lockton, and it cannot—must not wait."

He turned to his desk and wrote me a cheque for sixty thousand pounds. "I want," said he, "to meet that bookmaking father-in-law of yours. He said he wanted a hobby that was worth while. Well, I am building a sanatorium for my young folks, and human life is more appealing than horseflesh. Ask him to come and take charge."

There are times when the fastest taxi seems to crawl. I could see Timothy Minns going definitely out of business, and I

wanted to claim Tess.



FANTASIA

By RALPH STOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER

T is a disconcerting thing, when dressing for dinner, to find that someone has been watching you through the entire process. Mr. Mumpus jerked the absurd little curtain over as much of the open porthole as it would cover, and fell to doing

the same thing with his hair.

As a matter of fact—and although he would not have had it known for the world—Mr. Mumpus was not in the habit of dressing for dinner at all. He was a hack accountant, if you know what that means, and when his day's work of mental acrobatics was done, he was only too pleased to climb into a moth-eaten dressing-gown and abandon himself to the production of uncertain noises on the clarinet, this being his only means of expressing what was in him, apart from a mind like a readyreckoner.

But on the s.s. Wykeba it was a different matter. He was on holiday—the first clean breakaway in his routine - sodden life. He had fallen to the cunningly-devised announcements of the Phipps Gilroy Navigation Company anent Island travel. He was "revelling in the romance of 'The Islands of the Blest,' witnessing the strange customs of a picturesque people, casting off for thirty days (and incidentally thirty pounds) the shackles of present-day civilisation, and harking back to untrammelled Nature."

Or so the announcements read, and who was he to argue the point? Had not the Wykeba touched at three separate South Sea Islands for not less than twelve hours apiece? Had he not witnessed a hula or a meke, or whatever they called it, nauseated himself in an effort to drink kava, and bought a war club (manufactured in Sydney) and a rush basket of coral fronds that he had no notion what to do with now he had it?

And now the Wykeba was alongside Mahiti wharf. Mr. Mumpus had looked it all up. Mahiti was a French protectorate with twelve thousand inhabitants. Its chief

exports were copra, pearl-shell, and rum, and he was there for twelve mortal hours. What was to be done? According to schedule, and the dictates of an intensely methodical mind, he should go ashore and "revel, etc.," but for the first time on his epoch-making tour his spirit rebelled. He refused to do any one of those things that Messrs. Phipps Gilroy had mapped out for Instead, he would take his clarinet into the music-room and get the rather dull little person in apparently eternal mauve "semi-evening" to play his accompaniments. She would do it. She seemed of the type that will do anything for anybody, and consequently received little or no attention

With this object in view, Mr. Mumpus pieced together his beloved instrument, and tested the reed by playing very softly the opening movement of a cavatina. During the pause that followed, a faint clapping of hands and a whispered "Encore!" came from behind the porthole curtain, and with a cluck of annoyance he drew it aside.

a cluck of annoyance he drew it aside.

"Go away!" he ordered severely.

"D'you hear? Go——" And there he

stopped.

There was something in the little picture he had disclosed that gave him pause. It was beautiful—far too beautiful to dispel peremptorily. The porthole was level with the wharf, and, as though in a dull gold frame, an elfin figure reclined, its soft brown eyes fastened on Mr. Mumpus in a child-like stare of wonderment, while from out the background of velvet darkness came a medley of tropic scent and sound—frangipane, copra, and sandalwood, the ceaseless chatter of crickets, the patter of naked feet, snatches of song.

"What you want?" demanded Mr. Mumpus, with a valiant effort at bêche-

de-mer.

The elf nodded at the instrument in his

"Me like 'im," it solemnly averred.

"You do, eh?" A whim seized Mr.

Mumpus. He knelt on the settee and trilled a stanza from the "The Mikado." "How's that?"

The elf wriggled its approval. Mr. Mumpus experienced the acute satisfaction of holding an audience in his hand.

of holding an audience in his hand.
"Ze Marseillaise!" it ordered, beating its small brown fists on the planking of the wharf. "Ze Marseillaise! 'E is ze day of France!"

And Mr. Mumpus found himself obliging with the utmost zest.

When it was done he still knelt on the settee, and contemplated at a range of

his life Mr. Mumpus obeyed impulse without question. Mechanically slipping a section of clarinet into either pocket of his "ready-to-wear" dinner-jacket, he insinuated his meagre person through the porthole and stood looking down on the elf.

"Now!" he cried with challenging abandon.

The child took him to a shop across the way, and pointed out a perfectly preposterous mask of bucolic cheeks and elongated nose.

"Im all right," she said judicially, and Mr. Mumpus bought it What was more,



""'Im all right,' she said judicially, and Mr. Mumpus bought it."

perhaps twelve inches this diverting work of Nature. It was apparently perfect, and hardly more than twelve years old. The hair was blue-black and of amazing length and richness, the teeth white and even, the skin a dull gold, the eyes—there was something in the eyes that vaguely disturbed Mr. Mumpus. They were essentially not of this world, but of another, mysterious, alluring, out there through the porthole. They caused him temporarily to overlook the fact that he was a hack accountant, and at the moment an exemplary tourist already late for an exemplary dinner of frozen meats and tinned asparagus. For the first time in

he put it on, to the intense delight of his companion, and they set off into the town, as strangely-assorted a pair as ever Mahitian moon has smiled upon.

Unquestionably it was the day of France. A band played somewhere. The flamboyant-bordered streets seethed with heterogeneous humanity—stolid Anglo-Saxons, vivacious Latins, Chinamen, Kanakas, and a blending of each too subtle for analysis. Carnival was in the air. No one cared—least of all Mr. Mumpus. No one knew him. He did not know himself. A solid handful of confetti caught him in the nape of the neck and slowly worked its passage down

his spine. A paper tongue, full three feet long, shot from out the laughing face of a passer-by and smote him on his false nose. This was too much. He bought a bag full of miniature bombs that exploded on impact, and used them with telling effect.

At a crowded café he ordered vin rouge and an omelette with the air of an habitué, and derived infinite satisfaction from watching a sprinkling of his fellow-passengers looking bored and a trifle foolish in their

bizarre surroundings.

There was the ponderous lady in blue, who had at one time no doubt possessed a voice, and her lap husband; also the young couple that had such an annoying habit of getting in the way on the boat deck of an evening; the Yankee inventor of an entirely new abortion in safety razors, and the successful composer who rendered life in the music-room unendurable with ludicrous ballads. They were all so obviously what they were, whereas he (Mr. Mumpus), behind his impenetrable incognito of vermilion pasteboard, might be anything—anything! Was he not sitting cheek by jowl with such romantic figures as schooner skippers, shellers, planters, adventurers? Their very conversation, heard in snatches and in conjunction with a second glass of vin rouge, held a mystery all its own-

"... too deep for skin-diving and sharks . . . Hear they've got compressors up in the Straits . . . fifty fathoms; what d'you say to that?"

"We could get a court in behind the old vanilla.'

"... wouldn't be enough run-back."

"Chop down vanilla, then. Must have a court . . . Put the 'boys' on to it on Monday. . . . Play you for that 'Passing Show' record on Wednesday."

"That's a go." "Here's how!"

"Cheerio!"

"Who's the gink in the proboscis?" "Don't know. But the kid's brother's watching 'em like a cat."

"But I thought he . . ."

"Out a week ago, and on the old lay . . ." It was at this juncture that the elf seized Mr. Mumpus by the hand and literally

dragged him into the street.

"Too much 'ot," she contrived to explain, as they wormed a passage through the throng, yet it occurred to Mr. Mumpus that the child's hand was cold, deathly cold.

"Ah Wong all right," she added, and steered him into a fetid haunt of fan-tan and "dope," where they found a vacant corner of a battered settee.

Exactly why they had come there Mr. Mumpus never discovered, for it seemed that he had no sooner taken in his surroundings of smoke, a Chinese banker by murky lamplight, wrangling humanity, and the staccato click of counters, and was fairly launched on coffee, liqueur, and a cigarette, than he was for some obscure reason wafted out of the place and across the street to the Palais de Danse.

The transition was a trifle sudden, but then so was the elf, and somehow it seemed to fit in with the generally kaleidoscopic

nature of the evening's happenings.

He could not play fan-tan, neither could he dance, yet he found his arms encircling the elf, and his feet moving more or less rhythmically to the strains of a two-piece orchestra. In fact, it seemed to him that he was going rather well. This, then, was dancing. He had no idea it was so simple merely a matter of "one-two, and onetwo," so that it came as all the more of a shock when he found himself on a moonlit

They had evidently danced clean through the Palais and out of the open door at the far end. The elf was rearranging his "madeup" tie that had an uncanny knack of standing on end. He looked into her upturned face and fancied that he saw fear

in her eyes.

But there was no time to make sure of anything in this fantasia that had caught him up like a whirlwind. They were off again, hand in hand along the hard, wet sand, skirting the festoons of silver ripples, and sending the soldier-crabs scuttling and crackling to their burrows. There was no sense in it all, no sense whatever, he reflected, and, thanking Providence on that account, joined his raucous baritone to the elf's clear contralto as she chanted a meke to the moon.

At a place where coral mushrooms reared fantastic shapes out of the still waters of the lagoon they cried a halt, and, sitting side by side in the sand, Mr. Mumpus "by request" boomed the fine, round notes of his clarinet into the night, while the elf listened enthralled. She had never met such a man. Indeed, it was extremely doubtful if she would ever meet such another.

To Mr. Mumpus it seemed that he had

never produced such exquisite sound. "Damon" and Raff's "Cavatina" floated in turn over the lagoon, and were lost in the distant thunder of the surf on the barrier reef.

She stood before him when they met, her two hands at her breast, as though to ward off a blow.

"Well?" he said in French.

She did not answer.



"It was at this juncture that the elf seized Mr. Mumpus by the hand and literally dragged him into the street."

He did not even notice when the elf left his side and went to meet the bulky shadow of a man that approached along the edge of the beach. "Well?" he repeated, and, taking her two shoulders in his hands, crushed them as in a vice.

"There was nothing there," pleaded the

elf, her face twisted with pain, "nothing-ah!"

"There were other portholes open. I saw silver through one. Why not have tried those others?"

"I do not know," wailed the elf.
"Pete—— Mon Dieu, stop! I do not know, unless—unless it was that."

A note hung on the still air—a reedlike note that swelled and faded and died.

The man turned his head in the direction of a grotesque figure squatting on the sand in the moonlight. Its profile was one of bloated cheeks and absurdly misshapen nose, and it swayed in rhythmic ecstasy.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Mumpus was in the throes of his favourite serenade, and nothing short of an earthquake would have disturbed him.

"Is he mad, or drunk, or both?" demanded the man.

"I do not know," repeated the elf dully. "It is the music——Pete!"

He had flung her aside and taken two strides towards the squatting figure, but only two. The elf's hand shot out and caught him by the ankle, spilling him on the ground, and a wild-cat, not an elf, was on his shoulders, with a coral boulder uplifted above his head.

He did not move. The elf stood back panting and viewed her handiwork. Still he did not move. Then she turned and ran blindly, madly, along the beach, a flitting figure in the moonlight that dwindled, and faded, and was lost amongst the palm groves.

And Mr. Mumpus finished his favourite serenade, and looked about him. The elf was gone. The spell was broken. Perhaps it was as well. He consulted his watch—the first sign of rational thought—and clucked in horror at the hour. It was nearly four, and the Wykeba sailed at dawn, and there was a hint of pallor on the horizon! He scrambled to his feet and hurried along the beach, passing within a few yards of an oblong shadow on the sand, until the dark bulk of the Wykeba loomed ahead.

But it was not until he emerged into the searching rays of the bunch-light at the head of the gangway, and the deck-hand had at first stared, then grinned, that he remembered his incognito and snatched it from his face. He hung it on the same hook as the rush-basket of coral fronds, lay smiling through the porthole for a space, and slept.

GRATITUDE.

THERE is not much that men can say who feel
Their hearts too full of worship to express
The little slender words of thankfulness
That to the lips of beggars glibly steal.

The world glides onwards round the blazing Wheel
Of Life in silence. Gratitude were less
If songs could recompense the hands which bless,
If I could tell you all I think and feel.

When winds in lonely desolation weep
On wasted remnants of forgotten flowers,
And faded beauties sigh themselves to sleep
Because the tempest of the Autumn lowers,
Life will be lovely still while memories keep
The light you gave them for the summer hours.

EDWARD H. LASCELLES.

THE HELPING HAND

By A. A. THOMSON

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

"YE just been looking in at the studio next door," said McCoy, seating himself luxuriously on Pendred's model throne.

Dicky Pendred viciously squeezed an inoffensive tube of Chinese white.

"Umph!" he replied.

Pendred used to illustrate the stories that McCoy wrote for the magazines, but they were quite good friends.

"I've been talking to the studio's inhabitant," pursued McCoy, "and she tells me that——"

"Umph!" grunted Dicky again.

"I wish you'd stop giving your celebrated impersonation of Big Chief Little Bear. I come here to talk to you about a supremely agreeable subject, and all I can get out of you is: Business with Larynx. The agreeable subject has just told me——"

Pendred laid down his brush.

"Look here, Mac," he said slowly. "I love you as a brother. I allow you to come here and make my mantelpiece your footstool. I let you toast herrings on my gasring. I even read the rotten novels you write; but I absolutely refuse to have you butting into this affair. If Mona and I can't settle this business ourselves, no one can settle it for us."

"Oh, sharper than the serpent's tooth! You're a genial soul, aren't you? If a fellow was to drag you out from under a tram, you'd accuse him first of butting in unnecessarily and then of trying to pick your

pockets."

"Not at all. I'm not under a tram. And if I was, I'd jolly well pull myself out. You're suffering under a horrid delusion if you think it's your duty to go careering about London working the deus ex machina business. Fairy godmothers don't smoke your brand of tobacco, and dear little cherubs don't wear grey flannel trousers. You're not cut out for the part. If you'd only go back to your normal conversation about Dostoieffsky and the musical glasses,

I'd be with you, but I won't stand for this. For goodness' sake, leave Mona out of it."

"I will not. I'm pursuing this task, Richard, my son, because I like you. I like your manly bearing and your exquisite old-world courtesy——"

Here Pendred dispassionately hurled a

maulstick at his companion.

"I say I admire your courtesy," McCoy went on, "and your radiant, sunny temperament; but, much as I revere all these sterling qualities, I am obliged to state that, in the matter of the lady next door, you have been an ass, a chump, a blitherer of the blitherers. If I may be permitted to use the elegant idiom of the Washington Senate, your name is Mutt—Pie-face D. Mutt, of Bonehead County. Your abysmal ignorance of the ways of women—"

"Of course you know all about women,"

sneered Dicky.

"I know enough to know that I don't know anything at all, but you haven't even sufficient savvy to know that. What do you want to go and quarrel with Mona for? There is only one thing more foolish than getting married, and that is not getting married when Nature and Providence and all that sort of thing intend you to. Now you two children were obviously meant to——"

"She says we weren't."

"What does she know about it? What does any woman know about anything?"

"She knows everything, apparently. We had it all out last week. She said that the creative artist must be independent—said that an artist is no less an artist because she's a woman."

"That's sensible enough. Did you

propose---

"I've proposed twenty-seven times."

"Ass! I mean, did you propose an amendment to that proposition?"

"Not exactly. I told her I wanted to protect her, and work for her and help her—"

" In other words, you did what you were accusing me of just now-you butted in."

"I did nothing of the kind. You see, we'd always been good pals-nothing more, you know---"

"I know. Good old Plato! Go on."

"Well, she asked me to criticise some of her black-and-white stuff. 'Come along. Dicky,' she said, 'tell me if you think this drawing is any good.' It was jolly good, but it had faults. I told her what they were, and-would you believe me?-she was quite mad about it."

"Naturally," said McCoy with a com-

placent smile.

"But why? She asked for criticism, and she was annoyed when she got it. Surely

that's unreasonable."

" My dear ass, of course it isn't. When I ask you to criticise my novels, I don't want telling that Balzac would have handled the denouement better, and that there's a split infinitive on page 65. No. Your job is to thump me gently on the back and murmur Jolly-clever, old man.' That's criticism."

"But I only wanted to help her."

"Oh, you priceless duffer. That's where you've offended her to the soul. A woman's one aim in life is to be the helper, not the helpee. No wonder you quarrelled."

But that isn't all. The next thing she did was to start criticising my work.

"And why not? You're not Velasquez, are you?"

"I know I'm not. Hang it all, I'm not that sort of conceited ass. But she actually said she wanted to help me."

" Ha, ha, ha!"

"What the deuce are you grinning at?" demanded Dicky in puzzled tones.

"The thing's funny. She only wanted to

help you! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, she did. Now, no self-respecting chap is going to stand that sort of thing. If you're an artist you've got to do your own job; nobody can do it for you."

"Oh, father of wisdom! Oh, caster Isn't that exactly what she of pearls!

said?"

"Yes, I believe it is, but it's quite different for her, of course. She's a woman——"

" Now, look here, old Dicky, do you want to marry this girl or don't you?

"You know I do. I'd give-

" All right, all right. You haven't time to recite the whole of the Golden Treasury now. The question is, what would Machiavelli have done under the circumstances?"

"What has he got to do with it?"

"Ah! You think my name is McCoy, but you're wrong. It's really Machiavelli. I am a man of low cunning, of deep deceptions, and it's lucky for you I am. This is a time for treasons, stratagems and spoils."

"What are you burbling about ?""

"This. Mona, as you say, is the most wonderful girl in the world, but she has "This. this fatal, ineradicable fault, this morbid passion for helping people. Well, let her do it."
"I tell you I won't. I've sworn I won't.

"Oh, do shut up. Let her imagine she's helping you. It's the only way. I've known her as long as you have, and I can tell you she's always been one of these Women with a Mission. It's the one thing she asks of you, and it's, only fair of you to humour her whim. You may have to deceive her a little, but it's a perfectly innocent deception in a good cause. It will please her, and it won't hurt vou."

"Of course, if you put it like that-" "I do. You'll be doing her a real kindness.

In fact, it's your absolute duty to allow her to display the mothering instinct and so forth.

"But I'm not going across to ask her to

come and tell me I can't draw."

"No one's asking you to. I have a deeplaid conspiracy all cut and dried. You must run over and tell her a pitiful tale. You're working at a drawing of a girl—an astonishingly beautiful girl, because she's to be an advertisement for tooth-paste or something -which must be finished by five o'clock, absolutely must. Your model has let you down—been run over by a 'bus on Haverstock Hill. Will she, Mona, as a neighbour —as a neighbour, mark you—come in and sit for you for an hour?"

"But I'm not doing a sketch of a Tooth-

paste Queen."

"Well, get some paper pinned to that board and start at once. Hurry up."

"But I've sworn never to set foot in her

studio again."

"Never mind what you've sworn. Tell her she's the one girl in Hampstead—the one girl in London-who can help you."

" But----"

"It's your duty to obey orders, my lad. Theirs not to reason why, and all that. Now cut along. I'll expect you back in five minutes."

Dicky cut along. He crossed the short passage that separated the studios, and raised his hand to seize the trim cat's-

knocker at Number Two. Knocker and door suddenly moved away from his grasp, and a girl stepped out, almost running into him. Dicky stood still. She was the sort of girl that made you stand still. You could not take her all in at a glance. When you first saw Mona, you received a vivid impression of a mass of unruly bobbed hair, two limpid eyes and a defiant little chin. (There ought to be a law against chins of that kind; they have been responsible for half the trouble in this world.) Then your gaze wandered to a pair of fascinatingly tiny suède shoes, two slim ankles and—but we must not leave After all, this is his Dicky on the mat. funeral.

"I say," Mona and Dicky began in one

breath.

Mona returned to the charge first.

"Di-Mr. Pendred," she said, "I was coming over to ask you to help me."

Dicky suppressed a gasp and smiled

politely.

"You're the one man in Hampstead—the one man in London—who can do it."

"I'd love to. You know I always---"

"This is quite different. Understand, please, I'm only asking you because you're an artist and live next door. If you—that is, my next door neighbour-had been a long-bearded Academician who took snuff, I should have asked you just the same. You see, I've been hard at work on some illustrations for a magazine and they've simply got to be in this afternoon. If they aren't the editor will send for my head on a charger ... and, Dicky, I... I've had an accident."

It was then he noticed that she had been holding her right hand behind her all the

"My hat!" he cried. "What on earth have you been doing?"

"I've cut my hand. It's nothing."

Dicky lost himself completely.

"Good Heavens!" he raved. "This comes of my not making you marry me out of hand. The moment I leave you alone, you go gashing yourself with knives, like . . . like the prophets of Baal . . . Let me see it. . . Your beautiful hand!"

"Don't be absurd, Dicky. How can thumbs be beautiful?"

"Let me 'phone for a doctor."

"Oh, you ridiculous man! I've doctored it myself." She showed him a hand, neatly bandaged in a white wrapping that was shot with dark red stains.

"You might have bled to death. These

sudden suicidal impulses——"

"Silly boy! I was sharpening a pencil." "I told you no woman could sharpen a

pencil."

"Well, you told me the proper tool for sharpening pencils was a razor-blade. was using the one that you lent me." Dicky was silent.

"I was sharpening my pencil," Mona went on, "and the blade slipped-I don't know why they call them safety-blades-"

"And it severed your-

" It bit into my beautiful thumb, and it's nothing, I keep telling you, only I can't finish those silly old drawings with my hand in a poke. That's why I was coming to ask you if you'd-

"You haven't even asked me to come

inside yet."

"Sorry. Do come in. The last drawing's

on the easel."

Dicky followed her into the bright little Most men can make a room confortable, and some women can make it dainty, but it requires the spirit of a Mona to combine these qualities in a superlative degree. Dicky surveyed the etchings on the walls, the flowers on the table and jolly pouffe cushions on the settee, and saw that they were good. It was not "arty" horrible word !-- it was just right. It was

"Here you are," she announced, pointing to a pencilled-in sketch. "It's an illustration for a story. Here's the galley—I believe they call it a galley; I can't think why."

"You surely don't read the things?" asked Dicky, utterly shocked. "I never do. I always draw a supercilious female on a Chesterfield, turning up her eyes at a fatuouslooking fellow with white spats and a simper. That suits all of them equally."

"It wouldn't do for this," retorted Mona indignantly; "there's a real open-air girl

in this. And a horse."

Dicky fought down an almost irresistible desire to say that no woman could draw a horse, then he looked round for the tools of the trade.

"I've got everything I want for the job," he said. "You keep the stuff handy, I must say. Now run away and play."

"Good boy. He shall have some tea

when he's finished."

Dicky settled down to his task. It is not easy to finish any one else's work, and that horse, in particular, was somewhat of a trial, for Mona's ideas of equine construction had been superbly imaginative rather than anatomically severe. But Dicky persevered



"'And, Dicky, I . . . I've had an accident."

and gradually a prancing Bucephalus arose out of the vague outlines of Mona's Rosinante. The minutes sped by, and Dicky toiled to the accompaniment of tinkling china in the next room.

"Oh, how topping! exclaimed Mona, as she came in again. "You've made my share in it look very shabby."

"Rot," Dicky assured her. "Absolute rot. No one will know we've collaborated. How do you like my Arab steed?"

"It's splendid. You are an awful brick, you know. Dicky, why have you been so frightfully decent when I was such a perfect little rotter a week ago?"

"Nonsense. It was I who behaved like a

sweep. When men are so disgustingly arrogant, they deserve jumping on. I was all wrong, of course. People can help each other. You'd have done the same for me.'

"Would you have let me ?"

"Of course I should. Lame dogs and stiles, and all that sort of thing. I say, do let me see that hand. Doesn't it smart?"

"No, no; it's quite comfy, thanks. I can do anything but draw horses with it.... And you don't think I'm silly for climbing down and letting you help me? I mean, you

won't crow over me because-"

" Crow ? Do I look like that sort of rooster? Why, as a matter of fact, I came over to ask you to help me." (This was the first word of the Machiavellian policy that he had been able to work in; it had hardly been necessary up to now.)

"You didn't really?" asked Mona in

amazement.

"I did. But you haven't even helped me

to that cup of tea yet." "I will presently. Tea and white walnut-

"That's the kind of help I need." (He felt sure Machiavelli would have said this.) "Stay me with Oolong, comfort me with pastries. Besides, you're such a---'

"Kettle's boiling," laughed Mona, and

tripped away.

Am I not wonderful?" she demanded a moment later. "I'm sure Cinquevalli couldn't pour out tea with his left hand."

She handed him a breakfast-cup-what use is an afternoon tea-cup to a man? and sat down on the settee opposite.

"So you were going to ask me to help you?" she inquired, gazing steadily at

him.

Dicky took a piece of cake and looked up. Then occurred that phenomenon which McCoy always described in his stories as: "His eyes met hers." It was in that glance that he really discovered Mona. There was no excuse for him. Any man who is sitting with an obese slice of white walnut-cake in his hand ought to be able to protect himself against the insidious wiles of the sentimental. But these things happen with devastating suddenness. In that one moment, all his ideas about artistic independence and Machiavellian diplomacy went hurtling headlong overboard.

"Mona," he blurted out, "this comic horse I've drawn for you is a little thing.

You've got to do a big thing for me."

"Good gracious! Are you going to cut your thumb now?"

"No; but I want you. I want you to help me—always. It's you. It's everything about you. I told you once that every man had got to do his job alone-"

I remember that quite well."

"I was a fool. I need you. I don't want to talk a lot of tommy-rot about twin-souls and inspiration. It's not that, but I'm only half a man without you. No fellow can get on with his job unless he's complete, and unless I have you---'

"Dicky darling, I know what you mean. Why didn't you say so before? What a lot of trouble it would have saved. I'm not complete without you, either, and I need you ever so much, now that—— The kettle's

boiling again."

The kettle was allowed to register its spluttering protest at its own sweet will. For reasons entirely beyond her control, Mona was unable to attend to it. continued to hold her tightly, and kissed her again.

An hour later McCoy rattled on the cat'shead knocker, and Mona, who was alone, let him in.

"He's gone," she said.

"I know," laughed the arch-conspirator. "I've just seen him, although he didn't see me. He was looking as if he'd lost a nickel sixpence and found a hundred-pound note. I take it that—that everything's all right."

Mona blushed crimson. "Ye-es," she murmured, "but you're a very wicked man. I'm sure it was frightfully wrong of me to take your advice. . . . I deceived him-

"Didn't I tell you that that was what men were for—especially men like Dicky? He has this absurd passion for helping people. Well and good. You allowed him to think he was doing you a good turn, whereas, now, you're going to live with him and help him for the rest of his life. He's a good lad, but he'd be simply too hopeless without you to look after him."

"I know; but wasn't it rather dreadful

of me to-

"Oh, fiddlesticks! Is it all right or isn't it? I mean, could you possibly have stayed unmarried or married anyone else?"

"No," said Mona most earnestly.

"Very well, then," said Mr. Machiavelli, "don't argue. And you'd better give me back my handkerchief. I want to see if those red ink stains will come out."



"ONE CROWDED HOUR. . . ."

THAT delightful moment when you are just waiting for the dinner-gong to go, and Bridget asks if Cook could speak to you for a moment.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

THE RAILWAY JOURNEY. By Harold Murray.

"HURRY up, dear! Got everything? Is this our train? Ought to be, judging by the amount I've paid for these tickets! . . . Phew! Corner seats—good! Ha, ha, look at 'em all rushing! Some people are so excitable...

Notatall, madam! Let me—— Don't mention
it!... Full up! We're full up, I tell you!... Stand at the window, dear, and look as if we had smallpox, or something. Don't want to be suffocated . . . They should come early. Just comfortable now. No, no room at all here!... Silly things! Don't they understand plain English?'

Thus the journey Northwards begins-invariably. The train glides out of the station, and suddenly we are all stricken dumb. Papers and books are produced. We hide ourselves behind them. We travel a good many miles in silence. Wife may speak to husband, and he may answer in a hushed voice very briefly, but nothing must be said or done to attract the attention of these other strange folk who have the impudence to travel in the same compartment. I mean, not at this stage. It is when

we have been travelling for about an hour that the fun begins. This is how we thaw—invariably:

Somebody else's wife (whispering): Rather a 'draught, dear-

Somebody else's wife's husband (aloud):
Eh? What? Well, perhaps—
My wife (gently): My dear, the window—

Myself (springing to action): Certainly, certainly! . . . Not at all——

That's done it! I know now with absolute certainty what will be the next move. The other woman smiles sweetly at my wife, then she says: "Are you going far?" Invariably.

"To Lincoln," says my wife politely.

"Why, so are we!" cries the other woman.

I put down my paper. I knew it. We are in for it. "A dear, quaint old city, is it not? . . . George, this lady and gentleman are going to Lincoln.

George puts down his paper. We all come out of our shells. Somebody mentions a Mr. Jameson Jawkins, who lives on the Lindum Road, and we all discover we know him intimately. Somebody says: "Well, well, the world's a small place, after all—" Invariably.

By the time we get to Peterborough, George and I have exchanged cards. George's wife and my wife are discussing with great animation Lincoln scenes and Lincoln friends. One couple is emboldened to produce a paper bag containing sandwiches; the other couple immediately follows suit. The other folk in the compartment emerge from their reserve, exchange periodicals, exhaustively discuss the weather, Lloyd George, unemployment, Sir Eric Geddes, Charlie Chaplin, the servant problem, the cost of provisions, and the time they will arrive.

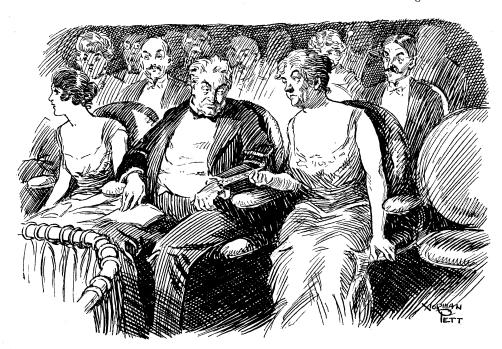
We have become a happy family when we reach Grantham. George has made some capital jokes. The ladies discover a mutual

Eventually the doddering little train—that stops at every tiny station to let in the cold air. and breezy old market women with huge baskets, and jolly Lincolnshire labourers with the proper Tennysonian dialect—lands us safe and sound at the cathedral city. We collect our belongings and say good-bye effusively.

Omnes: "See you again very soon, I hope! Delighted to have travelled with you! Hope you will have a good time!"

And now I come to the curious part of the whole business. It puzzles me immenselyindeed, I give it up.

Why, when we emerge from the train, does my wife say, "Let them get on in front. We shan't want to see them again "?



THE DIFFERENCE.

Wife: I do wish you'd pay more attention to this play, George; it's as good as a sermon. HUSBAND (dozing): It certainly is, my dear, but the orchestra wakes me up between the acts.

hatred of some unhappy Lincolnian, and become increasingly confidential. When we change, of course we get into the same compartment of the lazy little train for Lincoln. Really it is delightful to have such pleasant travelling companions.

"We shall have to see more of you," says

George's wife. Invariably.

"Come to our little place in Cricklewood and have dinner when we get back," says George, who is smoking one of my cigars and pretending he enjoys it.

"Delighted, old man," say I. "And when you come over to see us, I'll show you that pamphlet I was telling you about. I quite agree with you that Lord Robert Cecil——"

Why does George say, "Come on, Amelia, and let's get rid of 'em''?

And why, if we do see them on the following day in the old High Street, do I say, "Look out! There are those awful people coming! Let's dodge down this side-street "

Why are they relieved if we do?

And why do we never see them any more if we can help it?

I don't know. But, alas, it is so! Invariably.

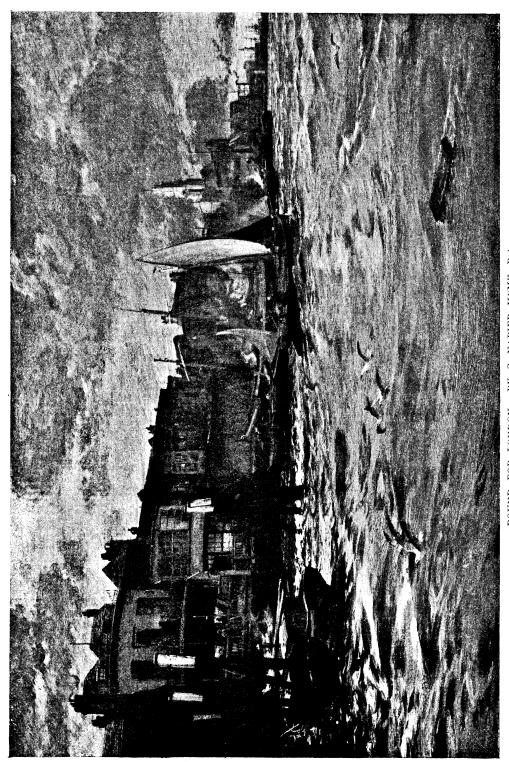


Dorothy, who has a natural "bump" of order, walking along a smooth, unbroken stretch of sand on the sea-shore, exclaimed: "Here's nice, tidy sand! Who brushed it?"

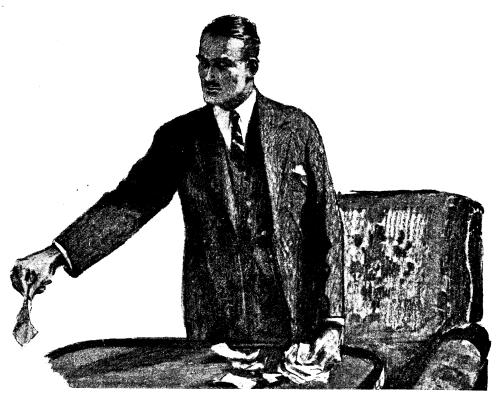




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"'I will wager that shekel, he said deliberately, 'that, with a start of one hour to-morrow, Pong reaches
Pau before Ping.'"

A RUN FOR OUR MONEY

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "The Brother of Daphne," "The Courts of Idleness," "Berry and Co.," "Anthony Lyveden."

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

The second story of a new series by Dornford Yates, in which the scenes are laid upon the Continent, the principal characters being the now familiar figures of Berry and Daphne Pleydell, their cousins Jonah and Jill Mansel, the charming American girl, Adèle, and her husband, the brother of Daphne, the narrator of their previous adventures.

ONAH looked at his watch.

"We have now," he said, "wasted exactly forty-nine minutes in kicking against the pricks. Short of an European war, you can't alter the geography of France, and the laws of Mathematics take a lot of upsetting. It's no good wishing that Bordeaux was Biarritz, or that Pau was half the distance it is from Angoulême. If you

don't want to go right through, you must stay at Bordeaux. It's the only possible place. If you don't want to stay at Bordeaux, you must go right through. I don't care which we do, but I do want to see something of Poitiers, and, if we don't get a move on, we shan't have time."

The words were spoken in the lounge of an hotel at Tours, whither we had come the

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day before, whence we were proposing to

depart within the hour.

All the way from Boulogne France had made an excellent host. So far she had never failed to offer us a good night's lodging, with History as a bedfellow, at the end of a respectable run. Indeed, from the point of view of them that go down to the South in cars, her famous capitals could hardly have been more conveniently disposed. This very evening, by lodging us at Angoulême, she was to repeat such hospitality for the last time. Upon the morrow we should be faced with a choice of making a dash for the villa which was awaiting our arrival at Pau, or breaking the journey asunder—but by no means in half -by sleeping at Bordeaux.

"I must confess," said Daphne, "that, for some reason or other, Bordeaux doesn't attract me. Incidentally, I'm getting rather

tired of unpacking and packing up."
"So far," said her husband, "as the bestowal and disinterment of my effects are concerned, I can confirm that statement. Indeed, if we had another week on the road, you'd both be exhausted. You left my sponge and bedroom slippers at Boulogne, my dressing-gown at Rouen, and my pyjamas at Chartres. I wish you'd tell me what you've left here. I'm simply dying to know."

"No," said Daphne. "You must wait till Angoulême. I wouldn't spoil it for

anything."
"Jade," said her husband. "And now stand back, please, everybody. I want to do a little stock-taking." With that, from every pocket he produced French notes of all denominations, in all stages of decay, and heaped them upon the table. "Now, this one," he added, gingerly extracting a filthy and dilapidated rag, "is a particularly interesting specimen. Apparently, upon close inspection, merely a valuable security, worth, to be exact, a shade under twopencehalfpenny, it is in reality a talisman. Whosoever touches it, cannot fail to contract at least two contagious diseases within the week. In view of the temperature of my coffee this morning, I'm saving it for the head-waiter."

"When," said I, "do you expect to go

down?"

"The pure in heart," said Berry, "are proof against its malignity. Don't you come too near. And look at this sere and yellow Now, that represents one franc. When I think that, upon offering that to a bar-tender, I shall not only not be assaulted, but shall actually receive a large bottle of beer and be lent a two-and-sixpenny glass from which to imbibe the same, I feel the deepest reverence for the French Government. No other authority in the world could possibly put up such a bluff and get away

"They are awful," said Jill, peering.
"They're perfectly beastly," said Berry, "and wholly ridiculous. However, since they're also legal tender, I suppose I may as well try and sort them out. What I really need is some rubber gloves and a box-respirator. Hullo! Just catch that one, will you? He's seen that dog over there. . . . You know, I'm not at all sure that they get enough air in my pocket. I suppose we couldn't get a hutch for the more advanced ones. I mean, I don't want to be cruel."

Again Jonah looked at his watch.

"We have now," he said, "wasted fifty-

six minutes in-

"Excuse me," said Berry, "but isn't this touching? Here's affectionate Albert." With the words, he laid a two-franc note tenderly upon my sleeve. "Now, I bet you don't get him off without tearing him.'

Disgustedly I managed to detach Albert, who instantly adhered to my fingers.

There was a shriek of laughter.
"Stick to him," said Berry. "I've lost the bet."

The injunction was unnecessary.

After Albert had clung once to Adèle's happily, gloved—fingers and twice to each of my hands, I trod upon him. Some of Albert was still upon my boot that evening at Angoulême.

"For the last time," said Jonah, "I appeal to you all to let that dog-eared mountebank rake over his muck-heap, and

attend to me."

My brother-in-law addressed Adèle.

"It is," he said, "a discreditable but incontrovertible fact that saints have always been reviled. I suppose it's jealousy." He turned to his wife. "By the way, did you pack my aureola? I left it hanging on the towel-rail."

"If," said Daphne, "you're referring to your body-belt, it's with your bed-socks."

"And why not between your flannel vests?" said her husband. "The grey ones we found at Margate, I mean. the imitation bone buttons. Ah, here we Now, if half a franc's no earthly, what'll who give me for two-thirds of fiftycentimes?"

Jonah sank into a chair and closed his

"Look here," said I desperately. "Once for all, are we going to stay at Bordeaux, or are we going right through?"

"I think we'd all rather go right through,"

said Jill.

"I know I would," said her brother. "And if Boy's leg was all right, I shouldn't hesitate. I'll answer for Ping. But, frankly, with Berry driving, I doubt if Pong'll fetch up. I mean, two hundred and twenty-two miles takes some biting off."

There was a pregnant silence. Then—

" He'll never do it," said Daphne.

Her husband, who was still busy with his paper, looked up defiantly. Then he took a thousand-franc note and laid it apart from its fellows upon the table.

"I will wager that shekel," he said deliberately, "that, with a start of one hour to-morrow, Pong reaches Pau before Ping."

There was a gasp of astonishment. "Done," said Jonah. "What's more, I'll bet you another you don't get in before

Berry raised his eyes to heaven.

"An insult," he said. "Never mind. Your dross shall wipe it out. I take vou."

"And I," said I, not to be outdone, " will put another on Pong for the double."

I felt that my honour was involved. After all, if I had not trained the mount, I was training the jockey.

"Right," said Jonah. "Will you both pay me now, or wait till you're out of hospital?"

"I think," said I, "we'll have a run for

our money.

The bets were made, and there was an end of it. But when we were again in the car, and my brother-in-law was threading his way out of Tours, I began to repent my

Considering that, when he took the wheel at Boulogne, Berry had had only three lessons in the management of a car, he had done most creditably. My brother-in-law was no fool. Moreover, on leaving Rouen, he and I had joined forces. Sitting beside him in the coupé, I had driven the car with his hands-after a little practice-with astonishing results. In two days we had, we prided ourselves, raised such collaboration from the ranks of the Mechanical to the society of the Fine Arts. My part was

comparatively easy. Sinking his initiative, he had more nearly converted himself into an intelligent piece of mechanism than I would have believed possible. It would, of course, be vain to suggest that Pong would not have gone faster if I had been able to drive with my own hands, or Berry had had my experience. Still, we had come very well, and with a start of a whole hour and a little luck. . . . Another point in our favour was that Adèle, who with Nobby completed our crew, had a pronounced gift for map-reading. She had an eye to country. She seemed to be able to scent the line we ought to take. The frequent treachery of signposts she laughed to scorn. Upon the morrow her confident assistance would be invaluable. . . .

What, when I made my bet, I had entirely forgotten, was that we were not always upon the open road. There was the rub. From Angoulême to Pau towns would have to be penetrated—among them Bordeaux itself-and in the towns our system had broken down. In a crowded street, though I could still administer, Berry could not When I endeavoured to allow execute. for his inexperience of traffic, I found it impossible accurately to gauge his capabilities. After a failure or two, it had been agreed that he should negotiate such streets as we encountered without my interference.

. . Of my haste to support Pong's honour,

I had forgotten the towns.

With years of practice behind us, Jonah and I could thrust through traffic, happy enough with an odd inch to spare. Naturally enough, Berry had no such confidence. An inch was of no use to him. He must have a good ell, and more also, before he would enter a gap. In the trough of a narrow street he laboured heavily. . . . There was no doubt about it. The towns through which we should have to pass on Wednesday would settle our chances. My money was as good as gone.

It seemed equally probable that Berry would save his stake. Barring accidents of the grosser sort, if we started betimes, we were bound to reach Pau before ten. Such a protasis robbed the bet of its savour. With a thousand francs at stake, it would be foolish not to take reasonable care. And the taking of reasonable care would all but eliminate the element of uncertainty. . . There was no getting away from it. Of the two wagers, only the first was worth To reach Pau before Jonah

would be a veritable triumph.

Moodily I communicated my reflections to

"I thought it was rather rash at the time," she replied. "But I think there's a sporting chance."

"That's right," said Berry. "Put your money on uncle. With enough encourage-

ment I can do anything."

"Permit me to encourage you to blow

"I suppose he'd pass between those two waggons," he said sarcastically.

"He would," said I.

"I don't think you quite see where I mean," said Berry, pointing. "I mean along that temporary passage, which would admit a small perambulator."

As he spoke, Ping brushed past us, slipped between the two wains, and disappeared.



"Berry was sitting wearily upon the running-board, with his mouth full and a glass of beer in his hand."

your horn," said I. "That child in front of you is too young to die." My brother in-law obeyed. "All the same, I'm afraid we're for it. It isn't so much a question of pace, pure and simple, for Jonah's a careful driver. But his street work is beautiful."

Berry sighed.

Berry stared after it in silence. At

length-

"I withdraw," he said. "I'm not a conjurer. If everybody stood well back, I used to be able to produce an egg, broken or unbroken according to the temperature of my hands, from a handkerchief about six feet square. People were very nice about it.

very nice. But an inability to introduce a quart into a pint pot has always been among my failings. Don't say I've got to turn to the left here, because I can't bear it."

"No," said Adèle, smiling. "Tout droit."

"What-past the steam-roller? How very touching! Excuse me, messieurs, but would you mind suspending your somewhat boisterous travail? My little car is

moment later we were scudding up the Poitiers road.

Now that we were clear of the town, we set to work diligently. Adèle pored over the map and the Michelin Guide; Berry turned himself into a mechanical doll; and I maintained a steady issue of orders until my throat was sore.

The weather was fair and the going was

good. Her new-born stiffness beginning to wear off, Pong went better than ever. Berry excelled himself.

With every kilometre we covered, my spirits rose, and when we overtook Jonah on the outskirts of Châtellerault, I could have

flung up my cap.

The latter was clearly immensely surprised to see us, and when we stopped, as was our custom, at a charcuterie to buy our lunch, and Ping had followed our example, leaned out of his window and asked me pointedly whether my leg was yet

Concealing a smile, I regretted that it was.

Jonah fingered his chin.
"Of course," he said warily, "it's a condition precedent that you don't drive to-morrow."

"Of course," I agreed. The confession of un-

easiness, however, did my heart good. It was plain that my imperturbable cousin was getting nervous.

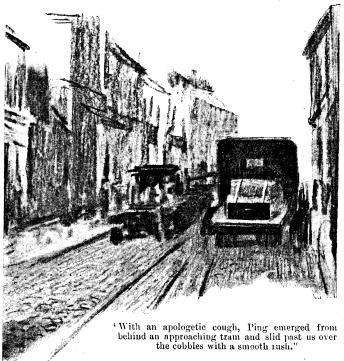
As we moved off again—

"We must lunch soon," said Berry. " My mouth's watering so fast, I can't keep up with it."

I patted Adèle's arm.

"Now you know the way to his heart," "Straight through the stomach,

"But how gross!" said Berry. how untrue! Naturally ascetic, but for the insistence of my physicians, I should long ago have let my hair grow and subsisted entirely on locusts and motionless lemonade. But a harsh Fate ruled otherwise. Excuse me, but I think that that there basket or ark in which the comfort is enshrined is



frightened . . . No answer. I suppose I Or shall we turn back? must pass it. You know, I didn't really half see the cathedral!"

" Go on," I said mercilessly. " Jam your foot on the accelerator and shut your eyes. Oh, and you might hold Nobby a minute, will you? I want to light a cigarette."

Adèle began to shake with laughter.

"With pleasure," said Berry acidly. "And then I'll help you on with your coat. I may say that, if you touch me with that mammal, I shall press and pull everything I can see and burst into tears. I'm all strung up, I am."

There was not much room, and the roller was ponderously closing in, but with a protruding tongue our luckless chauffeur crept slowly past the monster in safety, and a

rather near the conduit through which flows that sparkling liquid which, when vapoured, supplies our motive power. And foie gras is notoriously susceptible to the baneful influence of neighbouring perfumes. Thank you. If those bits of heaven were to taste of petrol, it would shorten my life. And now, where was I?"

I turned to Adèle.

"He's off," said I. "The prospect of gluttony always loosens his tongue. There's really only one way to stop him. What about lunching at the top of this hill? Or can you bear it till we've passed Poitiers?"

A mischievous look came into Adèle's

brown eyes.

"It's not half-past twelve yet," she said slowly. My brother in-law groaned. "Still . . . I don't know. . . . After all, we did have breakfast rather early, didn't we?'

Berry smacked his lips.

"A sensible woman," he said, "is above boobies."

As he spoke, Ping swept by stormily.

There was a moment's silence. Then-

"Hurray," cried Adèle excitedly; "we've got a rise!"

It was patently true. Jonah was wishful to reassure himself upon a point which an hour ago he had taken for granted. The reflection that at the moment we had not been trying to outdistance him increased our delight. All the same, his ability to outdrive us was unquestionable. But whether he could give us the start he had agreed to was another matter.

We ate a festive lunch. . .

An hour with Poitiers is like a sip of old

The absence of the stir and bustle which fret her sister capitals is notable. reverend and thoughtful is the old greymuzzled town that it is hard to recognise the bristling war-dog that bestrode the toughest centuries, snarled in the face of Fate, and pulled down Time. The old soldier has got him a cassock and become a gentle-faced dominie. The sleepy music of bells calling, the pensive air of study, the odour of simple piety, the sober confidence of great possessions, are most impressive. Poitiers has beaten her swords into crosiers and her spears into tuning-forks. Never was there an old age so ripe, so mellow, so becoming. With this for evidence, you may look History in the eyes and swear that you have seen Poitiers in the prime of her full life. The dead will turn in their graves to hear you; children unborn will

say you knew no better. And Poitiers will take the threefold compliment with a grave smile. She has heard it so often.

Celt, Roman, Visigoth, Moor, Englishman -all these have held Poitiers in turn. Proud of their tenure, lest History should forget, three at least of them have set up their boasts in stone. The place was, I imagine, a favourite. Kings used her, certainly. Dread Harry Plantagenet gave her a proud cathedral. Among her orchards Cœur de Lion worshipped Jehane, jousted, sang of a summer evening, and spent his happiest days. Beneath her shadow the Black Prince lighted such a candle of Chivalry as has never yet been put out. Not without honour of her own countrymen, for thirteen years the High Court of Parliament preferred her to Paris. Within her walls the sainted Joan argued her inspiration.

I have dived at random into her wallet, yet see what I have brought forth. memories precious, Poitiers are

uncommon rich.

As if to console us for our departure, the road to Sister Angoulême was superb. Broad, straight, smooth as any floor, the great highway stretched like a strip of marquetry inlaid upon the countryside. Its invitation was irresistible. . . .

We reached the windy town in time for a

late tea.

As soon as this was over, Berry and I escaped and carried Pong off to a garage, there to be oiled and greased against the morrow's race. Somewhat to our amusement, before we had been there ten minutes, our cousin arrived with Ping and the same object. Had the incident occurred at Poitiers, I should have been encouraged as well. It was another sign that Jonah did not despise his opponents, and his opinion was worth having. As it was, the compliment left me unmoved. . .

The truth was, Berry had that afternoon contracted two habits. Again and again on the way from Poitiers he had shown a marked tendency to choke his engine, and five times he had failed to mesh the gears when changing speed. Twice we had had to stop altogether and start again. He had, of course, reproached himself violently, and I had made light of the matter. But, for all the comfort I offered him, I was seriously alarmed. In a word, his sudden lapse suggested that my brother-in law was entering that most unpleasant stage which must be traversed by all who will become

chauffeurs and are taught, so to speak, to

run before they can walk.

It was after we had dined, and when my wife and I were seated-myself, by virtue of my injury, upon a couch, and she upon a cushion beside me—before the comfort of a glowing log fire, that Adèle laid down the Guide and leaned her head against my knee.

"I'm glad I married you," she said.

I looked at Nobby.

"So are we both," said I.

"I wonder," said Adèle, "whether you are really, or whether you're just, being nice."

"Personally, I'm just being nice. Nobby is really. Of course he may be making the best of a bad job. As a worldly good of mine, I just endowed you with him, and that was that."

"You were both very happy before—

before I came."

"We thought we were."

"O-o-oh," said Adèle, twisting her head around, to see my face. "You were. You know you were."

The gleeful accusation of the soft brown eyes was irresistible. To gain time, I swallowed. Then-

"So were you," I said desperately.
"I know I was," was the disconcerting

"Well, then, why shouldn't we-

"But you said you weren't."

I called the Sealyham.

"Nobby," said I, "I'm being bullied. The woman we love is turning my words against me."

For a moment the dog looked at us. Then

he sat up and begged.

"And what," said Adèle, caressing him, "does that mean?"

"He's pleading my cause—obviously."
"I'm not so sure," said Adèle. "I wish

he could talk."

"You're a wicked, suspicious girl. Here are two miserable males, all pale and terrembling for love of you—you've only got to smile to make them rich—and you set your small pink heel upon their devotion. I admit it's a soft heel-one of the very softest---

"— I ever remember," flashed Adèle.
"How very interesting! 'Heels I have
Held,' by Wild Oats. Were the others
pink, too?"

Solemnly I regarded her.

"A little more," said I, "and I shan't teach her to drive."

Adèle tossed her head.

"Berry's going to do that," she said.

"Directly we get to Pau."

I laughed savagely.

"I'm talking of automobiles," I said, " not golf balls.

"I know," said my wife. "And Berry's going to-

"Well, he's not!" I shouted. "For one thing, he can't, and, for another, it's my right, and I won't give it up. I've been looking forward to it ever since I knew you. I've dreamed about it. You're miles cleverer than I am, you're wise, you're quick-witted, you can play, you can sing like a nightingale, you can take me on at tennis, you can ride—driving a car's about the only thing I can teach you, and—"

Adèle laid a smooth hand upon my mouth. "Nobby and I," she said, "are very proud of you. They're not in the same street with their master, they know, but they're awfully proud to be his wife and deg."

To such preposterous generosity there was but one answer.

As I made it—

"May I teach you to drive, lady?"

A far-away look came into the soft brown

"If you don't," said Adèle, "nobody shall."

The day of the race dawned, clear and jubilant. By eight o'clock the sun was high in a blue heaven, new-swept by a steady breeze. Limping into the courtyard before breakfast, I rejoiced to notice that the air was appreciably warmer than any I had breathed for a month.

We had hoped to leave Angoulême at nine o'clock. Actually it was a quarter to ten before the luggage was finally strapped into place and my brother-in-law climbed into the car. With a sigh for a bad beginning, I reflected that if we could not cover the two hundred and twenty odd miles in twelve and a quarter hours, we ought to be

Jonah stood by, watch in hand.

" Are you ready?" he said.

 ${f I}$ nodded.

"Right," said my cousin. "I'm not sure we've picked the best route, but it's too late now. No divergence allowed."

"I agree."

" And you don't drive." " It's out of the question."

"Right. Like to double the bets?"

"No," said Adèle, "they wouldn't. won't allow it. But I'll bet with you. can't afford much, but I'll bet you a hundred francs we're there before you."

"I'll give you tens," said my cousin. " And I start in one hour from NOW!"

When I say that, upon the word being given, Pong, whose manners had been hitherto above reproach, utterly refused to start or be started, it will be seen that Fate was against us. . . .

It took us exactly two minutes to locate the trouble-which was in the magnetoand just over two hours to put it right.

As we slid out of Angoulême, an impatient clock announced that it was mid-day.

At least the delay had done something. So far as the second wager was concerned, it had altered the whole complexion of the We were no longer betting upon anything approaching a certainty. Indeed, unless we could break the back of the distance before daylight failed, our chances of reaching Pau before ten were worth little. If the road to Bordeaux were as fine as that from Poitiers, and Berry could find his form, we should probably run to time. We could not afford, however, to give a minute away.

As luck would have it, the state of the road was, on the whole, rather worse than any we had used since we left Boulogne. Presumably untouched for over six years, the wear and tear to which, as one of the arteries springing from a great port, it had been subjected, had turned a sleek highway into a shadow of itself. There was no flesh; the skin was broken; the very bones were staring.

For the first half-hour we told one another that we had struck a bad patch. For the second we expressed nervous hopes that the going would grow no worse. After that, Berry and I lost interest and suffered in silence. Indeed, but for Adèle, I think we should have thrown up the sponge and spent the night at Bordeaux.

My lady, however, kept us both going. She had studied our route until she knew it by heart, and was just burning to pilot us through Bordeaux and thence across

Gasconv.

"They're sure to make mistakes after Bordeaux. You know what the signposts are like. And the road's really tricky. But I spent two hours looking it up yesterday evening. I took you through Barbezieux all right, didn't I? "

"Like a book, darling."

"Well, I can do that every time. And I daresay they'll have tire trouble. the road's no worse for us than it is for them, and after Bordeaux it'll probably be splendid. Of course we'll be there before ten—we can't help it. I want to be there before Jonah. I've got a hundred——''

"My dear," I expostulated, "I don't

want to-

"We've got a jolly good chance, any way. While you were getting her right, I got the ·lunch, and we can eat that without stopping. You can feed Berry. We'll gain half an hour like that.'

Before such optimism I had not the face to point out that, if our opponents had any sense at all, they had lunched before leaving Angoulême.

"Here's a nice patch," added Adèle.

" Put her along, you two."

Spurred by her enthusiasm, we bent

again to the oars.

Contrary to my expectation, my brotherin-law, if unusually silent, was driving well. But the road was against him. He had not sufficient experience to be able to keep his foot steady upon the accelerator when a high speed and a rude surface conspired to dislodge it—a shortcoming which caused us all three much discomfort and lost a lot of mileage. Then, again, I dared not let him drive too close to the side of the road. Right at the edge the surface was well preserved, and I knew that Jonah's off wheels would make good use of it. finesse, however, was out of Berry's reach. We pelted along upon what remained of the crown painfully.

Seventy-three miles separate Bordeaux from Angoulême, and at the end of two hours fifty-four of them lay behind us. All things considered, this was extremely good, and when Adèle suggested that we should eat our lunch, I agreed quite cheer-

fully.

The suggestion, however, that I should feed Berry proved impracticable.

After four endeavours to introduce one

end of a *petit pain* into his mouth-

"Would it be asking too much," said my brother-in-law, "if I suggested that you should suspend this assault? I don't know what part of your face you eat with, but I usually use my mouth. I admit it's a bit of a rosebud, but that's no excuse for all these 'outers.' Yes, I know it's a scream, but I was once told never to put foie gras upon the nose or cheeks. They say it draws the skin. Oh, and don't let's have any comic nonsense about the beer," he added shortly. "Pour it straight into my breastpocket and have done with it. Then I can suck my handkerchief."

As he spoke, Nobby leaned forward and took the dishevelled sandwich out of my

unready fingers.

"That's right," added Berry, with the laugh of a maniac. "Cast my portion to the dogs." He dabbed his face with a

As the words left my mouth, I noticed for the first time that my brother-in-law was tiring.

For the moment I thought I was mistaken, for upon our previous runs he had never turned a hair. Now, however, he seemed to be driving with an effort. . . As if to confirm my suspicions, at the very next hill he missed his change.

" I think," I said quickly, " you ought to



handkerchief. "Never mind. When his hour comes, you'll have to hold him out of the window. I'm not going to stop every time he wants to be sick."

Eventually it was decided that, since we should have to stop for petrol, Berry must seize that opportunity to devour some food.

"Besides," I concluded, "a rest of a quarter of an hour will do you good."

have your lunch right away. It's no good getting done in for want of food."

Berry shot me a pathetic glance.

"It isn't that, old chap. It's— Hang it all, it's my shoulder! That cursed muscular rheumatism cropped up again yesterday..."

The murder was out.

After a little he admitted that, ever since we had left Poitiers, any quick movement of his left arm had caused him intense

pain.

Of course both Adèle and I besought him to stop there and then and let the race go to blazes. Of this he would not hear, declaring that, so long as Jonah was behind, victory was not out of sight, and that nothing short of paralysis would induce him to jilt the jade. After a little argument, we let him have his way . . .

The road continued to offer an abominable passage, and when we stopped at a garage in Bordeaux, it was five minutes to

three of a beautiful afternoon.

The third bidon was discharging its contents into Pong's tank, and Berry was sitting wearily upon the running-board, with his mouth full and a glass of beer in his hand, when, with an apologetic cough, Ping emerged from behind an approaching tram and slid past us over the cobbles with a smooth rush. The off-side window was open, and, as the car went by, Jonah waved to us.

There was no doubt about it, my cousin was out to win. It was also transparently clear that Adèle and I, at any rate, had lost our money. We could not compete with an average of thirty-six miles an hour.

" Boy ! "

"Yes, darling?"

" Is that the last bidon?"

"Yes. But Berry won't have finished for at least ten minutes. Besides——"

"Couldn't I drive for a bit, just till he's finished his lunch?"

I stared at my wife. Then--

"I don't see why you shouldn't, dear, except that the streets of Bordeaux are

rather rough on a beginner.'

"I'll be very careful," pleaded Adèle, "and—and, after all, we shall be moving. And it can't affect the bets. Nothing was said about Berry having to drive."

I smiled ruefully.

"As far as the bets are concerned, we might as well stay here the night. We've got a hundred and fifty miles in front of us, and seven hours—five of them after dark—to do them in. Berry's shoulder has put the lid on. We shan't get in before midnight."

"You never know," said Adèle.

Berry suspended the process of masti-

cation to put his oar in.

"Let her drive," he said huskily. "One thing's certain. She can't do any worse than I have."

"You never know," said Adèle.

A minute later she was in the driver's seat, and I had folded the rug and placed it behind her back.

As Berry took his seat—

"That's right," I said. "Now let in the clutch gently... Well done. Change.... Good girl! Now, I shouldn't try to pass this lorry until—"

"I think you would," said Adèle, changing into third and darting in front of

the monster.

"Good Heavens!" I cried. Then: "Look out for that tram, lady. You'd better"

As the tram was left standing, I caught my brother-in-law by the arm.

"She can drive!" I said stupidly.

"Nonsense," said Berry, "I'm willing her."

"You fool!" I shouted, shaking him. "I tell you she can drive!" We flashed between two waggons. "Look at that! She's a first-class driver, and she's going to save your stake!"

"What's really worrying me," said Adèle, is how we're to pass Jonah without him

seeing us."

There was an electric silence. Then-

"For-rard!" yelled Berry. "For-r-a-r-d! Out of the way, fat face, or we'll take the coat off your back." A portly Frenchman leaped into safety with a scream. "That's the style. For-rard! Fill the fife, dear heart, fill the blinkin' fife; there's, a cyciclist on the horizon. For-rard!"

To sound the horn would have been a work of supererogation. Maddened by our vociferous exuberance, Nobby lifted up his voice and barked like a demoniac. The ungodly hullabaloo with which we shook the dust of Bordeaux from off our tires will be remembered fearfully by all who witnessed our exit from that city.

When I had indulged my excitement, I left the terrier and Berry to finish the latter's

lunch and turned to my wife.

Sitting there, with her little hands about the wheel, she made a bewitching picture. She had thrown her fur coat open, and the breeze from the open window was playing greedily with the embroidery about her throat. Her soft hair, too, was now at the wind's mercy, and but for a little suède hat, which would have suited Rosalind, the dark strand that lay flickering upon her cheek would have been one of many. Chin in air, eyebrows raised, lids lowered, the faintest of smiles hovering about her small red mouth, my lady leaned back

with an indescribable air of easy efficiency which was most attractive. Only the parted lips at all betrayed her eagerness. . .

I felt very proud suddenly.

The road was vile, but Pong flew over it without a tremor. Looking upon his driver, I found it difficult to appreciate that a small silk-stockinged foot I could not see was setting and maintaining his beautiful steady pace.

As I stared at her, marvelling, the smile deepened, and a little gloved hand left the

wheel and stole into mine.

I pulled the glove back and kissed the white wrist. . . .

"And I was going to teach you," I said

humbly.

"So was I," wailed Berry. "I'd arranged everything. I was going to be so patient."

"I was looking forward to it so much,"

I said wistfully.

"Oh, and don't you think I was?" cried Adèle. "It was so dear of you, lad.

I was going to pretend——"

"It was much more dearer of me," said Berry. "But then, I'm like that. Of course," he added, "you ought to have driven from Boulogne. Don't tell me why you held your peace, because I know. And I think it was just sweet of you, darling, and, but for your husband's presence, I should kiss you by force."

The car fled on.

There was little traffic, but thrice we came upon cows and once upon a large flock of sheep. We could only pray that Jonah had endured the same trials.

As we slid through Langon, thirty miles distant from Bordeaux, I looked at my watch. Two minutes to four. Adèle noticed the movement and asked the time. When I told her, she frowned.

" Not good enough," she said simply.

The light was beginning to fail now, and I asked if she would have the lamps lit.

She shook her head.

"Not yet, Boy."

At last the road was presenting a better surface. As we flashed up a long incline, a glance at the speedometer showed me that we were doing fifty. As I looked again, the needle swung slowly to fifty-five. : . .

I began to peer into the distance for

Jonah's dust.

With a low snarl we swooped into La Réole, whipped unhesitatingly to right and left, coughed at cross-streets, and then swept out of the town ere Berry had found its name in the Michelin Guide.

Again I asked my wife if she would have the headlights.

"Not yet, Boy."

"Shall I raise the wind screen?"

" Please."

Together Berry and I observed her wish, while with her own right hand she closed the window. The rush of the cool air was more than freshening, and I turned up her coat collar and fastened the heavy fur about her throat.

The car tore on.

Lights began to appear—one by one, stabbing the dusk with their beams, steady, conspicuous. One only, far in the distance, seemed ill-defined—a faint smudge against the twilight. Then it went out altogether.

"Jonah," said Adèle quietly.

She was right.

Within a minute we could see the smear again—more clearly. It was Ping's tail-lamp.

I began to tremble with excitement. Beside me I could hear Berry breathing fast

through his nose.

Half a dozen times we lost the light, only to pick it up again a moment later. Each time it was brighter than before. We were gaining rapidly. . . .

We could not have been more than a furlong behind, when the sudden appearance of a cluster of bright pinpricks immediately ahead showed that we were approaching Marmande.

Instantly Ping's tail-light began to grow bigger. Jonah was slowing up for the town. In a moment we should be in a position to pass. . . .

In silence Berry and I clasped one another. Somewhere between us Nobby began to

pant.

As we entered Marmande, there were not thirty paces between the two cars. And my unsuspecting cousin was going dead slow. A twitch of the wheel, and we should leave him standing. . . .

Then, without any warning, Adèle slowed

up and fell in behind Ping.

I could have screamed to her to go by.

Deliberately she was throwing away the chance of a lifetime.

Desperately I laid my hand on her arm.

"Adèle!" I cried hoarsely. "My darling, aren't you——"

By way of answer, she gave a little crow of rejoicing and turned sharp round to the right.

Jonah had passed straight on.

As Ping leaped forward, the scales fell

from my eyes.

Adèle was for the side-streets. If she could only rejoin the main road at a point ahead of Jonah, the latter would never know that we had passed him. If

I began to hope very much that my wife knew the plan of Marmande rather better

than I.

Through the dusk I could see that the street we were using ran on to a bridge. It was there, I supposed, that we should turn to the left. . . .

To my horror, Adèle thrust on to the

bridge at an increased pace.

"A-aren't you going to turn?" I stammered. "I mean, we'll never——"

"I said the road was tricky," said Adèle, "but I hardly dared to hope they'd make such a bad mistake." We sailed off the

bridge and on to a beautiful road. "Ah, this is more like it. I don't know where Jonah's going, but this is the way to Pau... And now I think it'll be safe to have the lights on. You might look behind first to see if they're coming. You see, if they'd seen us go by, the game would have been up. As it is..."

* * * * * *

At half-past seven that evening we drove into Pau.

Arrived at our villa, we put the car away and hurried indoors.

It was almost eight o'clock when Ping discharged his passengers upon the front steps.

In silence and from the landing we watched

them enter the hall.

When they were all inside, I released Nobby.

The third story in this series will appear in the next number.

TO YOU.

BLUE skies and sunlight, these and you Are never separate: where'er You go, they always go with you, Because the sun in skies of blue

Can only with your eyes compare.

Sunrise and you, who shame the morn,
Like sisters smiling hand in hand,
Put wreaths of flowers on twigs of thorn,
And paint with red the fields of corn,
And sweeten all the sombre land.

You, like the noon, with sacred fire
Warm those cold caves below the dce?,
Where sighs within the soul expire,
And bend the poppies of desire
To drink their own enchanted sleep.

You are most like the fragrant eve,
Whose silence lulls the hills to rest,
Whose beauty makes us half believe
That life was never meant to grieve,
And that the songs of youth are best.

EDWARD H. LASCELLES.

NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY

MODERN DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SWIFT TRANSMISSION OF ILLUSTRATIONS FOR NEWSPAPER PURPOSES

By ARTHUR LAWRENCE

→ REAT efforts are nowadays being made to reduce to a minimum the time taken between photographing some great event and the publication of the picture. So far the greatest development in this direction is the wonderful phototelegraphic machine which is exclusively used by The Daily Mirror and its allied publications. By means of this invention three remarkably successful cable-photographs of the Dempsey-Carpentier fight, which took place at Jersey City, U.S.A., were published within thirty-six hours of the fight. This is the first time that it has been possible for a British newspaper reader to see photographs of an event which has happened thousands of miles away within such a short time after its occurrence.

This speeding-up process, which has been going on for some time, has not yet reached its zenith; but these cable-photographs mark a new epoch in the transmission of

news pictures.

One of these pictures, which we reproduce, shows Carpentier lying on the floor of the ring. It is because of the angle at which the photograph was taken that Carpentier's head does not appear. It will be of interest to compare this cable-photograph of the fight with the reproduction here given of one taken in the ordinary way and sent across by boat. In the cable-photographs the background of many thousands of people is stopped out.

These photographs were sent from New York by Mr. H. G. Bartholomew, of *The Daily Mirror*, the inventor of the contrivance. Sent 3778 miles in code, they were decoded in London, and the negatives were made by *The Mirror's* photo-tele-

graphic machine.

At the time of writing, moreover, there is another startling indication of what can be done by the aid of electricity, for a Frenchman, M. Belin, with the assistance of $L\epsilon$ Matin, has just perfected a system of wireless transmission by which absolutely autographic messages are reproduced, so that cheques can now be signed by "wire-As Le Matin remarks, "If it had been forecasted a few years, or even a few months ago, that the words one writes could at the same moment be read in America as if by someone looking over one's shoulder, in the very shape in which the pen traces them; if it had been forecasted that a diplomatic signature could be appended to a treaty by wireless, or that a treaty or cheque could be signed three thousand miles away, the reply would have been that one spoke of a fairy tale. Yet all this is now actually possible. The transmission takes place in a few minutes without the assistance of any cable. The future thus opened by this new triumph of a French idea is unbounded. Not only will there be no impossibility as to the transmission of judicial documents, autograph manuscripts, designs, and works of art; not only can one foresee that most important diplomatic signatures can to-morrow be attached to treaties and conventions, but the very authenticity of the message acquires fresh guarantees by their autographed transmission."

Speed of transmission will very probably be increased, for whilst currents in the earth or atmospheric conditions may render Morse signals illegible, and necessitate retransmission, that is not the case with Belin messages, in which the interfering currents can only render the letters a little irregular without altering their form. Like Mr. Bartholomew, M. Belin is quite a young man.

It would seem likely, therefore, that before long it will not be even thirty-six hours before photographs of far distant events are ready for publication, but that we shall be able to publish photographs of the most distant event on the same day.

News photographs now occupy such a large part of our daily press that this speeding-up in transmission is of great interest. It has already reached a point which makes earlier efforts seem quite a matter of a long time ago, although, as a

matter of fact, those of us who are in the forties can remember, not merely the initiation of press photography, but the time when the black-and-white artist reigned supreme, and if photographs were used, outside the portrait studio, they were employed only as adjuncts to the penwork of the artist.

Since then the public has grown fond of the camera. The photograph is taken "in evidence." It is regarded by many as a faithful reporter, showing irrefutably that the thing really did happen, and that the folk depicted were actually there.

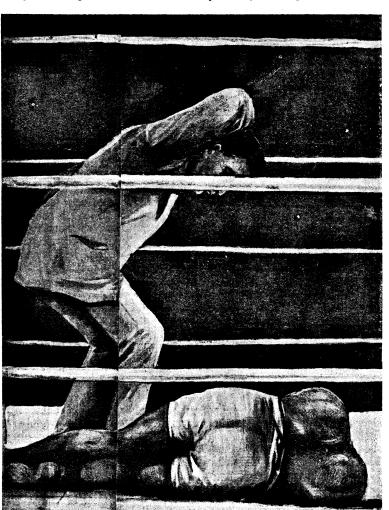
It may be that many of us still prefer the work of the artist. Some of the well-known warartists and other clever illustrators could not only give us a stronger and more distinctive presentment, but, if we are accustomed

to see with our own eyes and not by way of the lens of a camera, we really get greater "realism" through the temperament of an artist than we can hope for in the work of the camera.

On the other hand, we owe much to the verisimilitude of the majority of the photo-

graphs presented to us in the illustrated press, and it is of interest to consider recent developments in enterprise and speed of transmission, and realise the difference which exists between the clever and the stupid man when armed with a camera.

If we turn back to the beginning—less than twenty-five years ago — when the



ONE OF THE CABLED PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE DEMPSEY-CARPENTIER FIGHT IN AMERICA, SENT 3778 MILES IN CODE AND DECODED AND PUBLISHED IN LONDON WITHIN THIRTY-SIX HOURS.

Reproduced by permission of the Daily Mirror.

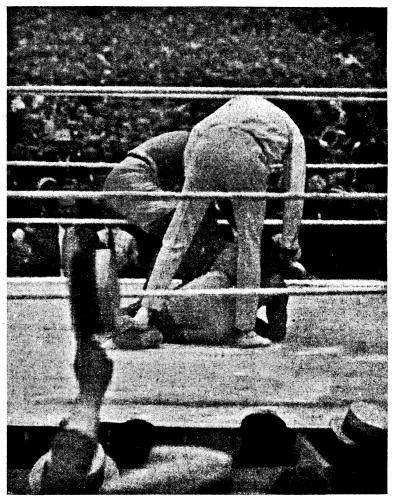
picture journals first started, we find that actual press photographers numbered just two. One of them worked in Fleet Street and the other in Bristol. The photograph which was taken before noon was just in time for the next day's issue, provided it had been taken not more than five miles

away from the office! The country photographer relied on the post, so that any picture which was taken, say, on the Monday would not appear until Wednesday. Nowadays we should hardly call this a news picture. We are now so "spoilt" in these matters that it is only in something very exceptional indeed

years ago. On the Saturday a fire occurred at St. Helen's. Two artists were set to work depicting the scene from telegraphic descriptions, and a picture was made which was reproduced as a whole page the next day, and proved to be surprisingly accurate.

"At the present time there must be over one hundred trained press photographers in

London. Of these, some have a real instinct for news. Others are only susceptible to specific instructions. On one occasion I sent a photographer to Paris to photograph the Grand That after-Prix. noon we were at our wits' end to find a picture for the front page, and while debating whether we should use a portrait of Мr. Balfour. because he was speaking next day, or a picture of a girl in bathing costume — for no reason whatever. our photographer walked into the office. 'Have you anything we can use?' we inquired very anxiously. He told us he had, as the Pas de Calais had gone ashore. With great shrewdness he had decided to leave the Grand Prix alone, notwithstanding instructions, and, nstead, had taken some good pictures



A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE DEMPSEY-CARPENTIER FIGHT SENT TO ENGLAND IN THE USUAL WAY BY SHIP.

From a photograph by Topical.

that the interest lasts for more than one day.

I have been discussing the evolution of the pictorial press with Mr. Godfrey Turner, who has been editorially connected with news photography since its inception, and he says: "My first introduction to picture journalism was on The Sunday Mail, some twenty-four of the people being taken off the ship. With these he had come straight back to the office. It was not so much in taking the pictures that he displayed his intelligence, but in disregarding his instructions to go on to Paris and deciding to bring his Pas de Calais pictures straight back to London.

"By way of illustrating the other sort of

press photographer, there is the instance of the man who was sent off to take pictures of a fire which was raging at Watford. On his way there the train he was in met with an accident, in which, luckily, no lives were lost. He ignored the scene of the wreckage and went on to the fire. When he got there, the fire was out. When he got back, the wreckage was cleared. So was he!"

The Grand National was the subject of one of the first attempts at what may be called "rush" photography. The negatives were developed in the train en route for London, and published in the paper on the following morning. This was followed by an attempt to show pictures taken in Paris for the Grand Prix on the morning after the race. Here the arrangements were carried a step further, for the photographs were developed and the half-tone blocks made on the voyage, thus saving three hours in the office.

When the San Francisco earthquake occurred in 1906, one London daily managed to publish photographs of the disaster two days before any other paper. This was due to an arrangement with one of the large American syndicates, who gave the New York representative the use of their private telephone to Chicago, so as to find out the exact moment when the photographs had reached that city. Meanwhile he got into touch with the Cunard and White Star Steamship Companies, so as to obtain facilities for putting the pictures on board ship in the hands of the purser. It was then found that the pictures would not arrive in time for these ships, but it happened that, when the pictures arrived, the North German Lloyd had a boat on point of departure. They reached New York at 3 a.m. Copies were made, and a special ferry across to Hoboken enabled the newspaper's representative just to catch the Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse. A special messenger met the ship off Southampton, and rushed the pictures to London by car. No other pictures of the dreadful catastrophe arrived until forty-eight hours later, so that what is technically known as a "scoop" was achieved.

Much the same procedure was adopted to get the first pictures of the Roosevelt expedition to East Africa on to the American market; but in this case a special messenger went from Naples to Paris, met the train from Brindisi, took special to Cherbourg, and just caught the *Kronprinz* back to New York. The reason for rushing these

pictures to America was that, while they held very little interest for London, the six pictures were valued at a thousand pounds in New York.

More recently a record was made in flying from Belfast to London at 160 miles an hour with pictures of the opening of the Ulster Parliament. The journey was accomplished in two hours and forty minutes, and not one paper left London for the country without pictures of the event of the day before.

In the early days of the "half-tone" block it was considered a wonderful thing to take a photograph of anything happening within about a hundred yards of the office, and to get a block ready for printing within three and a half hours. Later on it was found possible to make a full-page block, mounted, captions set, block stereotyped and running on the machine within fifty-five minutes. At the present time thirty-five minutes is regarded as sufficient for any "rush" picture; but usually the first hurried block is only used in the early part of the printing, until a thoroughly etched block is ready, when it is substituted for the other at the earliest possible moment.

Of course an element of what one must call "luck" enters largely into the exploits of press photographers. The part taken by chance in the affairs of the hunter of pictures is shown in the case of the photographer who went to Madrid to photograph the wedding of the King and Princess Ena. The office received a wire from him stating that a bomb had been thrown at the carriage, but without indicating whether he had been able to get anything of it. On his return he was asked: "Did you get the explosion?" "How do I know," he replied, "until I have developed the negative?"

At the moment of the explosion he had lifted the camera above his head, being on the outside of the crowd, and was uncertain whether the lens was even directed to the right spot. On developing the negative it was discovered that his luck was in, and a double page was made of the picture.

Another photographer had exceptional luck when he was sent to photograph the funeral cortège at Windsor on the occasion of the death of the late King Edward VII. There were no less than thirteen "crowned heads" in the procession. By the payment of fairly large sums of money, all the other photographers had gained what they believed to be the best points of vantage. One man had to content himself with scrambling on to a wall, and thought himself most

unfortunately situated. Yet his picture was taken at such an angle (it is reproduced with this article) that his was the only photograph which showed the figures of all the thirteen Sovereigns quite clearly, with no one Royal Personage hiding another, as was the case with the other photographs taken.

The celebrated "snapshot" of the sinking of the *Blücher* was taken by an amateur with a small camera, the plate measuring about $2\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches. He had no idea, until he met a friend more conversant

with such things than himself, that his little photograph had any value. It was sold for £100, and then sold again at ten times that figure. It was reproduced by careful enlargement to about ten times the size of the negative.

The success which attends the man who goes a-hunting of news with a camera owes something to chance and much to his own personality, so that those of us who enjoy pictorial records on our breakfast table within a surprisingly short time of the event can but wish him the best of luck in his adventures.



THE ONLY PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PROCESSION PASSING THROUGH WINDSOR FOR THE FUNERAL OF KING EDWARD VII. WHICH SHOWS ALL THE THIRTEEN CROWNED HEADS QUITE CLEARLY, WITH NO ONE ROYAL PERSONAGE HIDING ANOTHER.

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THE IDEAL TRANSACTION

By ALAN J. THOMPSON

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM HATHERELL

HE Maitlands were very rich. Their big Elizabethan "place" at Staggshott, furnished in the neo-antique style by the most expensive firm in London, was the acme of ostentation. It had cost Seymour Maitland more money than he had ever dreamed of possessing ten years before, and even a distant glimpse of the twisted chimneys made him glow and swell with pride.

Mr. Maitland exhibited all the arrogance, the extravagance, and the "tight wrist on trifles" characteristic of the nouveau riche. It is not difficult, therefore, to understand his anger when young Hector Tremaine requested the loan of thirty pounds.

"Cool! Cool, upon my word!" said the stockbroker explosively. "To—to force your way in here while we are at breakfast and demand thirty pounds from me—me! An intrusion, sir—an unpardonable intrusion!"

Tremaine shook his head. He was a self-possessed young fellow—little more than a boy—with a thin face and a thatch of untidy black hair. His appearance in a shabby tweed suit was not imposing, but the wide brow, the deep-set grey eyes, and the firm lines of the jaw indicated possibilities of no ordinary nature.

"Excuse me, Mr. Maitland, but I did not force my way in," he said quietly. "Your servant brought me here. And I did not demand anything. I asked you if you would be good enough to lend me thirty pounds

"And I said 'No,'" interrupted Seymour Maitland. "And I said that you, Master Tremaine, have presumed on a schoolboy acquaintance with my son to come to Oakwood, to—to hold me up like a confounded highwayman, before my wife and daughter, for thirty pounds. Thirty

pounds, indeed! A piece of infernal insolence! What d'you say, Charlotte?"

Mrs. Maitland, very pink and white and plump in a pale blue satin wrapper, smiled amiably at her reflection in the massive silver urn.

"A piece of insolence, indeed!" she said. She always agreed with her husband, experience having taught her that disagreement was unprofitable.

"And mind this, you, sir," went on the stockbroker, with his mouth full of bacon, "I won't have it! You can take yourself off—see?"

Tremaine flushed and his thin hands tightened on his walking-stick. He was a gentleman, and not to be insulted by this confounded parvenu, who—then he remembered what had brought him to Oakwood, and his colour faded. He was a beggar, and a beggar to succeed must forget that there is such a thing as pride.

He looked steadily at the stockbroker a big handsome man with a fleshy face and

a fine sanguine complexion.

"I am sorry if I have inconvenienced you, Mr. Maitland," he said civilly, "but it was necessary that I should see you at once. As you know, I have no parents now. I have to support my sister and myself on three pounds a week. My sister has been seriously ill, and it is essential that she should spend a few weeks on the South Coast immediately. If she remains in London, she will probably—die. The money I had saved—very little—has gone in the expenses of Ethel's illness. You are a rich man now, and as I was able to be useful to Maurice at Relton, I thought perhaps you would be willing to lend me the money I need."

"You thought! Then think again!" said Mr. Maitland facetiously. "If your

sister is ill, you can get her into a sana-torium."

Tremaine shook his head. "That would be no good to Ethel," he replied. "She is too sensitive. And she could not bear to be

parted from me."

The stockbroker helped himself to butter. "Indeed!" he commented. "And I can't bear to be parted from thirty pounds on such a ridiculous pretext. I don't encourage begging, Mr. Tremaine, even to provide a holiday for you and your sensitive sister."

Audrey Maitland, who was making a sorry pretence of eating toast and marmalade, dropped her knife and looked up. She was sixteen, a tall, undeveloped girl, awkward as yet in appearance and manner, and undistinguished except for beautiful brown hair and unusually fine blue eyes. Her face was painfully flushed as she turned to her father.

"Father, you—you are unfair!" she said in a low voice. "I am sure Mr. Tremaine wants the money for his sister. And it is our duty to help him. Let him have the money, father! Please let him! What are thirty pounds to you when you have—"

"Hold your tongue, miss!" growled the stockbroker, striking the table a sharp blow. "Are you going to tell me my duty? Good Heavens, what next? Hold your tongue!"

"Hold your tongue, Audrey," echoed

Mrs. Maitland blandly.

Mr. Maitland raised his coffee cup with an unsteady hand. "Well, Tremaine, have you anything more to say?" he demanded. "Perhaps you would like to borrow my car or—my watch?"

The young man winced at the sneer, but

did not lose his self-control.

"I want to borrow thirty pounds," he

said coolly.

"Then go to another shop!" was the rude retort. "Doesn't this bear out what I have always said, Charlotte? Directly a man has a little success, half the needy adventurers in London are on his track. But they shan't have a penny of mine—not a penny!"

"I am asking you to lend me the money, Mr. Maitland," persisted Tremaine. "You shall have it all back this year. Surely you won't refuse to help me? Think of poor Ethel and what it means to her! And you—

you will not miss the money."

"No," assented Mr. Maitland, "I shan't. Perhaps you, too, consider it is my duty to hand over thirty pounds?"

Tremaine looked steadily at the rich man,

leaning back in his chair and stroking his moustache, and his lower jaw became

suddenly prominent.

"Yes," he answered firmly, "I do. I think it is your duty, in the name of common humanity, to help my sister. In your place I should consider it a privilege. You have so many of the good things of life that you ought not to grudge a trifle like this. However, I see you do, so I won't waste any more time here."

As he picked up his hat and gloves, Audrey Maitland slipped from her seat and

went to her father's side.

"Oh, father, do—do let him have the money!" she pleaded, her hand on her father's arm. "Take some of my money—stop my allowance or anything! I don't mind. Only do help Maurice's old friend! You ought, you know, because—""

"Ought!" echoed the stockbroker, snapping up the word as a dog wolfs a biscuit.

"Ought! We'll see about 'ought.' If you are beginning to dictate to me again, my girl, I shall have to teach you your place. Didn't I order you to hold your tongue?

. . . I did." He flung off the girl's hand roughly. "Then leave the room at once!"

"Audrey, leave the room," said Mrs. Maitland placidly. "You forget yourself,

child."

For a moment the girl hesitated, looking from Tremaine's downcast face to the heated countenance of her sire. Then, obedient to the insistent gestures of the latter, she shrugged her shoulders, turned, and went quietly from the room.

Mr. Maitland rose from his chair and

strode up to Tremaine.

"And you clear out of it!" he said angrily. "You're a confounded Socialist, like your father—nothing less. If I see you hanging about Oakwood again, I'll have you flung into the road! Mind that!" He jerked the bell with violence.

Tremaine faced him composedly. "I don't mind at all!" he retorted. "I should be sorry to think I shall ever see Oakwood again. You are rich and successful, Mr. Maitland, but you will never be what my father was—a gentleman."

Seymour Maitland turned crimson. He raised a menacing hand, but there was something about Tremaine's set countenance that disconcerted him. His hand dropped to his side, and with a muttered oath he turned away.

"Show this—show Mr. Tremaine out!"

he growled to the servant.

Tremaine went slowly down the drive. He had been a fool to come—to waste five shillings on travelling. He ought to have realised that Maitland was not of a forgiving nature. His late adversary had been jealous of his father when they were young men, and they had quarrelled. Although luckless

the successful stockbroker could not forgive him his better birth

and finer nature.

Well, it did not matter a rap except for Ethel. Poor little Ethel! The child was in a most precarious state, and-

The sound of hurrying footsteps made Tremaine turn

sharply.

Mr. Tre-Tremaine! "Mr.

maine!"

It was Audrey Maitland, her brown skirt and her pretty brown hair flying in the breeze, her long black-stockinged legs covering the ground in boyish fashion.

Flushed and breathless, she came to Tremaine and caught his hand in her thin, hot

fingers.

"Oh, I am sorry — most awfully sorry!" she gasped. "Father behaved like a pig! All this money is absolutely ruining him! He was quite decent when we were poor, and - but of course vou will never forgive us. Here is the money—only not all of it. Over twenty pounds, though, I think."

She pushed a jumble of notes and silver into the hand of her dumbfounded companion.

"I am sorry: it is so little," " I—but I went on the girl. must run back, or there will be another row.

"Wait, wait!" cried Tremaine. "My dear girl, what are you thinking about? This is awfully good of you - most generous—but it is impossible, quite impossible for me to take money from you!"

He tried in vain to return the money. Audrey Maitland, stepping back quickly, made it impossible.

"But you must, you must!" she declared

with vehemence. "It is not for you, Mr. Tremaine, but for your sister, you know. The money is nothing to me. I was saving



"Tremaine flushed and his thin hands tightened on his walking-stick."

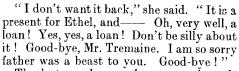
stuck up about it! Don't you see-don't you understand?"

Tremaine, looking at the girl's flushed and

eager face, looking into her tear-dimmed

eyes, understood.
"Yes," he said slowly. "And I will accept this - as a loan, of course. And thank you, Miss Maitland, thank you with all my heart. You shall have the money back soon

-very soon. If it is ever



The last word came from several yards away. Miss Maitland had turned and was

already in full flight.

Tremaine stood very still, watching the chestnuts—then it disappeared.



"'I won't have it! You can take yourself off-see?'"

possible for meto repay your kindness, I——" But with a quick gesture the girl interrupted him.

II.

IF Lady Holton-Gore had a fault--some people said she had many-it was a

tendency to be over-emphatic. When, for instance, Tremaine reached the end of the long gallery to pay his respects to his hostess, she caught both his hands and pressed

"Mr. Tremaine! At last!" she exclaimed dramatically. " Now the success of my little party is assured. But how unpunctual you great men from over the seas are! I had quite given you up."

"You are very kind," rejoined Tremaine, with some embarrassment. "I was detained at the Colonial Office. I am returning to

Australia to-morrow, you know."

"I know," said her ladyship lugubriously. "Hence this black dress, Mr. Tremaine. What a pity you cannot stay for the rest of the season! Can't I persuade you? But no, I won't try. Where so many younger and far more beautiful women have failed, what chance should I have? Tell me, Mr. Tremaine, is it true that, compared with the great state you help to govern, the state of matrimony is for you too trivial to have any attractions?"
Tremaine smiled. "You are laughing at

me, Lady Holton-Gore," he said.

Never!" cried his hostess. matter is too serious for jest. bachelor of forty or so—spend two months in London, and yet return to Australia heart-whole! It is a reflection on the Mother Country—on all of us! demand an explanation. The truth, on your life!"

She menaced him with her fan.

"The explanation is very simple," replied Tremaine. "Much as I admire all your delightful sex, Lady Holton-Gore, I have had no time to think of matrimony-no time to think of anything except work."

 \mathbf{her} hostess covered ears with

beautiful, begemmed hands.

" Abominable! "Horrible!" she cried. I Ah, my dear bishop, you haveyou really have come! Now I am happy!

Tremaine passed beyond the sound of her

ladyship's tireless voice.

If it was not absolutely true that he had no time for anything beyond his work, he certainly had no taste for social functions, and he was already regretting the promise that had brought him to Lady Holton-Gore's reception.

Tall and upright, with a thin brown face and close grizzled hair, Tremaine was distinctly military in appearance, and as he passed down the rapidly filling room, several

of the many people who looked at him with interested curiosity decided that, despite his plain evening-clothes, devoid of ribbon or order, he must be a soldier.

Few of the social celebrities present recognised him as the eminent Colonial statesman whose dislike of publicity and self-advertisement was so genuine that even the press photographers were disconcerted by it. In the land of his adoption, however, where he had accomplished such great things, where he had gained so much honour and public affection, Tremaine's face was as familiar as that of the King himself.

He was close to the chair, in an unoccupied recess at the further end of the room, at which he was aiming, when he came face to face with a tall slender woman in a simple elegant dress of cream silk. Her white neck was encircled by shimmering pearls. Diamonds glittered in her corsage and in her soft dark hair.

years Tremaine—five \mathbf{her} seniorregarded her as a girl, yet she was thirtyfive. There were faint lines on her forehead and about the beautiful eyes which were those of a woman who had suffered and endured.

At the sight of her Tremaine flushed to the roots of his hair. His rather grim face was transfigured with boyish excitement.

"Miss Maitland!" he exclaimed. "What luck! Why, I had given up all hope of ever seeing you again! I- Ah!" He broke off as the girl started and drew back. "I have startled you. I beg your pardon. You don't know me. And you-perhaps you are no longer-Miss Maitland."

Slowly the colour ebbed into the girl's white cheeks. Her eyes dilated a little.

"Yes, I am Miss Maitland," she said quietly. "And you-you are-I cannot remember your face, but your voice seems familiar."

" You have a good memory, Miss Maitland," said Tremaine. "It is twenty years since you heard me speak. Tremaine—Hector Tremaine. Do you remember me now-at Oakwood?"

Audrey Maitland nodded. "I remember," she said, with a smile that was curiously sad.

Oakwood? Yes."

"Then to business!" exclaimed Tremaine. He was openly excited. "But, first, here is a chair which——"

"No, thank you, I will not sit down," interposed the girl hurriedly. "And I-You will excuse me, Mr. Tremaine, when I tell you that I have only a few minutes to

spare."

Tremaine perceived her nervous backward glance, but he was too obsessed with this wonderful rencontre to analyse it. He was wondering why this girl, who had grace and charm that distinguished her from the majority of her sex, had remained umnarried.

"Twenty years!" he said. "And all that time I have been heavily in your debt, Miss Maitland! Probably you have forgotten it. The amount is—to be exact twenty-three pounds twelve shillings and sixpence."

"Quite a fortune!" commented the girl. Her head was bent as she twisted the heavy

bracelet on her thin wrist.

Tremaine laughed. "Well, it was the foundation of a fortune, at all events," he rejoined. "A mere trifle, of course, to you. I have always been glad to know that, as far as the actual money was concerned, there was no need to worry. Seymour Maitland's daughter would scarcely worry about twenty pounds or so!"
"Scarcely," murmured the girl.

"But even that was a small consolation when I thought what an idea you must have of my gratitude," went on Tremaine. "You can't think how that has worried me, Miss Maitland. But I am not altogether to blame. With the money that you so generously lent me, I was able to take my sister to Bournemouth and to see her regain her strength. She was, perhaps you may remember, an invalid?"

"I remember," replied Miss Maitland quickly. "There is no need for you to recall circumstances which I remember quite well. and any moment I may have to go."

"But you must first let me relieve myself of twenty years' burden!" said Tremaine, with a laugh. "At Bournemouth I became friendly with an Australian doctor. He was interested in Ethel—my sister—and on his advice and with his help we went to New South Wales. A few months after our arrival I wrote to you, explaining that, thanks to your kindness, my sister was convalescent, and I enclosed the money I owed you. The letter was returned with 'Gone away. unknown,' written across it. Further attempts to find your whereabouts only increased my disappointment. How was it that you left Oakwood so soon?"

The girl shrugged her shoulders. "I have no idea," she answered. "I was not consulted in the matter, you may be sure. All

I know is that father bought a house in Scotland—a regular castle—and moved into it before we had been at Oakwood twelve months. We moved again within two years."

"I see," said Tremaine, nodding. "Money makes money, and often breeds restlessness. eh? Perhaps that explains why I have been contented to stay in Sydney for twenty years. Certainly I have never made a fortune as Mr. Maitland has done, although I have been prosperous enough in my modest fashion, and"

" Please don't talk like that, or I shall think you are a hypocrite," interrupted Miss Maitland. "I know quite well what you have done in Australia, Mr. Tremaine, and it would be absurd for you to pretend that you have not succeeded wonderfully."

"Any success I have had is due, in the first place, to you, Miss Maitland," said Tremaine quickly. "If it had not been for your kindness, I should not have gone to Bournemouth when I did, or met Dr. Anstruther, the man who altered my whole life. And I want you to believe how grateful we have always been-Ethel and I-for what you did for us. It was a noble and generous action. Every day for twenty years I have thought of it. If you knew what your kindness has meant to me, you would probably be surprised."

The girl flushed at the warmth of the

man's voice and look.

"You make too much of what was, after all, a very trifling service," she said coldly.

But Tremaine was not to be rebuffed. "You are mistaken," he rejoined. "It was a service of inestimable value. It taught me-at a time when I needed the lesson badly—that such qualities as kindness, sympathy, and unselfishness really existed. You gave me fresh heart to struggle against pretty heavy odds. I determined to win, so that I might prove to you that I had been worthy of your sympathy. I—you will laugh at me, Miss Maitland—but I used to imagine myself coming back to England loaded with honours and riches to place at your feet. You were the princess in the fairy tale, and I was the fortunate youth, and of course there were wedding-bells, and we lived happily ever afterwards! I was very young.

"You must have been," agreed Miss Maitland drily. "Still, thank you for all the nice things you have said, Mr. Tremaine. I am glad you have 'made good,' as the saying is. Good-bye."

But Tremaine waved away her proffered hand.

"I must have your address; I must pay my debt," he urged. "We may never meet again. I am returning to Australia to-morrow."

"I should prefer to leave it as it is," said Miss Maitland slowly. "Let me enjoy the luxury of feeling that I have at least done one useful thing in my life." She spoke with a bitterness that Tremaine found disturbing. " Freely lent and fully repaid with gratitude. Let it remain the one ideal transaction, Mr. Tremaine.

There was a brief silence. Some emotion transcending the ordinary moved them both. Tremaine held out his hand.

"It shall be as you wish," he said quietly. "But I hope you will give me your address. I should like to write to you, and Ethel would like to write, too. Perhaps some day you will visit Australia, and----

"Mees Maitland, Mees Maitland!"

A harsh voice broke unceremoniously into Tremaine's remarks. The girl started and, scarcely waiting to touch Tremaine's hand, turned away to join a black-browed, stoutlybuilt Italian who was approaching with unconcealed annoyance on his fat yellow face. He was a man of about fifty, handsome in a swarthy fashion, and dressed extremely well. He took Miss Maitland by the arm and led her away, talking in a low, rapid voice and gesticulating freely.

Tremaine, annoyed at the interruption, was about to follow, when a short, dapper man, remarkable for a monocle, an affable smile, and half a dozen glittering orders,

touched him on the arm.

"Ah, Tremaine!" he said. "Surprised to see you at this sort of crush. Infernal hot, isn't it ? "

"Infernal's the word," assented Tremaine, smiling. "I say, Quesnay, who is that big foreign chap across there with Miss Maitland-girl in white? Yes, there!"

Quesnay, a brilliant light of the Foreign Office, had the reputation of knowing everything and everyone in London worth knowing. He lived up to the reputation more creditably than any other man could have done.

"That?" he queried. "My dear Tremaine, what a question! That's Signor Orrinno, the entertainment agent, you know. Supplies all the best talent to all the best people, and makes a thundering good thing out of it. The Signor's a bit of a bully, but he knows his work. Of course HoltonGore--tight-fisted old sinner-would only engage Orrinno's cheap line, mediocre talent. Still, that girl-what d'you say her name is? Maitland?—can play the piano pretty well. I heard her accompany Vascagni at Melderton's."

'Impossible!" exclaimed Tremaine. "You are making a mistake, Quesnay. She is Seymour Maitland's daughter! know her. I have just been talking to her."

The quidnunc shrugged his shoulders. "Very likely," he said. "But I'm not mistaken. Besides, if she is Seymour Maitland's girl-which I confess is news to me-what difference does that make? Seymour has been a back number for the last ten years. He went up like a rocket and came down like a stick. Made a big fortune, and gambled on 'Change like a bally ass until his bad day came. He lost every pennymostly in Westerns—absolute smash. The Maitlands dropped out completely. Never heard of 'em since the débâcle until to-night. Very creditable to the girl to have got into Orrinno's crowd. Wretched life for a woman, though, eh?"

"Good Heavens, yes!" assented Tremaine, in some agitation. "But Miss Maitland—I cannot believe she would be reduced to such a necessity. No, no, Quesnay, you are mistaken this time. Her appearance

alone—look at her diamonds!"

"Look at the moon!" retorted Quesnay, with good-natured scorn. "Those 'diamonds' have never seen Hatton Garden or anywhere near it! Paste, my dear fellow, paste. All those trinkets that your protégée is wearing are imitation. These professional people have to make the best show they can, but— Well, you're very unsophisticated, Tremaine. Now, if you want to see the real thing, there is the Duchess of Anglehaven-just by the window. Now, those are diamonds! That bracelet --- But I'm as dry as a red herring! Come and see if we can find a drink."

Tremaine, however, declined. Essentially a man of action, he was already recovering from the stupefaction that had overwhelmed him as he listened to Quesnay's chatter. Seymour Maitland ruined, penniless! Audrey Maitland earning her living as a "cheap" pianist! For a minute the accepted verities of life seemed to be failing

Then Tremaine turned to look for Miss Maitland. He had lost sight of her among the fashionable crowd that now thronged the gallery. Above the buzz of conversation he heard the sound of a piano, but when he reached the adjoining room, Miss Maitland had performed her duty and

departed.

He learned from Signor Orrinno that the girl had gone to fulfil another engagement, but when he asked the impresario for her address he met with a decided refusal. The Signor declared that it was against all professional etiquette to divulge the address of an employé.

Tremaine, however, accustomed to having his own way, was not to be thwarted by a man like Orrinno, and he was soon in possession of the information he desired.

Miss Maitland lived at Wandsworth, and an hour later Tremaine rang the bell of a dingy little house in a mean street, illlighted, depressing, and apparently without end.

He rang three times before the door was opened by a white-faced girl in a plain blouse and dark skirt. Tremaine had found what he sought.

"I am not to be evaded, you see," he said rather sternly. "It is late, I know, but there are several things I must say to

you to-night, so I am coming in."

Miss Maitland, plainly overwhelmed with surprise, offered only a weak resistance. Tremaine, disregarding her protests, stepped into the narrow passage. He saw by the light of the smoky lamp that the girl had been crying, and he was about to explain his unconventional call, when a tumult of angry voices from above broke the somewhat awkward silence.

With a cry of alarm, the girl turned and began to run up the uncarpeted stairs. Half-way up she turned and faced Tre-

maine, who was following her.

"Go! Oh, please go!" she entreated. "You-you ought not to have come! Oh, why did you come?"

Tremaine never forgot the grief and shame

that agitated her countenance.

"I came to help you, Miss Maitland," he said quietly, "and-incidentally-to pay my debt."

The angry voices were rising. With a helpless gesture the girl turned and hurried on into the room that faced the second flight of stairs.

Tremaine, standing at the open door, was

able to witness what followed.

An old man in a dirty dressing-gown was standing with his back to the fireplace, confronting a hatchet-faced woman with a curious mixture of fear and defiance.

" But, my-my dear Mrs. Galloway, you -you are unreasonable," he said uncer-

tainly.

The light shone full on his flabby face, and, despite the ravages of time and alcohol, Tremaine recognised the once arrogant plutocrat, Seymour Maitland. The man was in a pitiable condition, and even the shaking hand that he raised to adjust his soiled cravat was scarcely able to perform its task.

"Don't 'my dear' me!" retorted the woman-unmistakably of the low-class landlady type-in a shrill voice. "I've 'ad enough of you and your tricks and lies, Mister Maitland. Fine words butter no parsnips! You pay me the money, or out you go-to-night! Yes, to-night-late an

"Impossible — impossible!" muttered Maitland feebly. "Would you—you turn my daughter into the streets at-at midnight? Have you no good feeling, Mrs.

Galloway, no—no conscience?"
"Conscience!" cried the landlady. "Don't you talk of conscience to me, you drunken beast! Yes, that's all you area drunken beast, and you knows it. Where's the money she give you Wednesday? Gone on booze—every penny! I know. And 'er 'alf starved, pore gal! Three months you've lived 'ere, Mister Maitland, and I 'aven't 'ad a quid from you yet. And you leadin' me 'usband to lose good money on them cussed 'orses. Yes!"

She turned sharply at a faint cry from Audrey Maitland, who had gone to her father and slipped her arm about his bowed

shoulders.

"Yes, that's what 'e's been doin', miss. Leadin' pore George astray! And when I asks 'im quiet and perlite for a trifle on account, 'e turns on me 'igh and mighty and —and tells me I'm unreasonable! I asks you, miss, am I unreasonable?"

"But-but I understood you had five pounds on Thursday," said the girl, in a low

"Me!" sniffed Mrs. Galloway. "Not me— 'im! 'E spent it, of course, and lied to you. Look at 'im, the ole scoundrel! I wonder you was fool enough to trust 'is word, miss. And 'ow you can touch 'im after the way he treats you when—— Well, it fair beats 'Owever, that's not 'ere nor there. I'm sorry for you, miss, and I'll give you a bed to-night; but if I don't 'ave no money, 'e won't sleep 'ere. That I swears. I won't 'ave that sot in my 'ouse while---

But Tremaine had learned all he wished to know, and, anxious to end a scene that he found extremely painful, he stepped into the room. A few quiet words, with a golden accompaniment, to the startled Mrs. Galloway, obtained her vehement blessing and, what was even better, her withdrawal.

As she closed the door, Seymour Maitland, who had been whispering to his daughter, shambled forward with outstretched hand.

"How d'you do, Tremaine?" he said, with a vacuous smile. "Audrey tells me you stayed with us at Oakwood." It was evident that the befuddled man had only half understood the girl's explanation. "Fine place, Oakwood, hey? Yes, yes. Fine place. But there's a finer one I have my eye on. Going to buy it soon. Just a little capital, and I shall get back all I dropped and more besides—yes, more besides. Run of bad luck. Speculating—on gigantic scale, y'know. Years of bad luck. Last week backed three outsiders for the Guineas. Confounded shame, hey?"

He wiped his damp face on a soiled handkerchief, then, leaning forward, clutched uncertainly at the lapel of Tremaine's

coat.

"But the luck must turn, sir," he went on in husky confidence. "And now's the time for it. Capital is all I want now. Lend me a hundred—no, fifty—lend me fifty pounds, Mr.—ah—Domain, and I'll make your fortune as well as my own. But"—he leered cunningly at Tremaine's expressionless face—"you want details, hey? You shall have 'em—you shall have 'em! Take a seat, and—— Audrey, bring us some refreshment! Whisky, I think—yes, whisky or brandy."

"We have neither, father," said Miss Maitland. "I will make some coffee."

Busy at a gas-ring, she had her back to the men; but Tremaine knew she was weeping, and as he thought what her life must have been for the last few years, his own eyes were a little misty. This was his "princess"! This was Seymour Maitland's daughter, to whom twenty pounds was a trifle beneath consideration! How his careless words at Lady Holton-Gore's must have racked her! She had pride; her suffering had not killed that. She would have let him go in ignorance.

The old man was still rambling on.

"Coffee!" he said querulously. "Faugh! I cannot swallow that wash! Nothing decent to drink—nothing. And I had the finest cellar in the country. There was that

Château Lafitte and the port—the '82 port. It was '82, wasn't it ! Hey! Yes, yes. I remember——''

His voice trailed into silence, and Tremaine was startled to see that he was asleep—asleep leaning against the mantelpiece—asleep with his filmy eyes half open. Tremaine guided him to the solitary armchair, and he sank into it in a curiously crumpled fashion, his head lolling forward, his mouth open.

Audrey came forward hurriedly. With a skill born, alas, of long practice, she adjusted the pitiable wreck of the once handsome

stockbroker.

"How long has he been like this?" asked Tremaine.

He stood looking down at the sleeper's puffy face, noting with misgiving the greyish pallor, the tinge of blue about lips and nostrils

"He has been getting steadily worse for years—ever since the big failure," was the girl's low-spoken reply. "But he—cannot go on much longer—like this."

"No," agreed Tremaine gravely. "No.

Very little longer, I'm afraid."

The girl bit her lip. It was evident that the incidents of the last few hours had placed a severe strain on her power of self-control.

"Won't you have some coffee?" she

 ${f asked}$.

"Yes, if you will sit here and have some, too." answered Tremaine.

Appearing quite unaware of the girl's demur, he made her sit down, poured out the coffee, and saw that she drank it and ate a biscuit. Taking a chair on the opposite side of the empty fireplace, the famous overseas statesman soon persuaded Audrey to tell him the mournful history of the Maitlands. He smoked and listened in silence to the girl's pathetic narrative, which had appropriate leit-motif in the stertorous breathing of the man who had risen so high only to fall to the depths.

Two years after Maitland's failure Audrey had lost her mother. Mrs. Maitland, it seemed, found life without luxury unpleasant, so, in her serene, effortless

fashion, she relinquished it.

Audrey was left with her father, and all her striving, her tears, reproaches, and prayers could not keep the ex-stockbroker's feet from the downward path. So the all-too-familiar tragedy — gambling and excess, degradation and ruin—ran its course,

"But Maurice—your brother—what happened to him?" asked Tremaine.

"Maurice quarrelled with father nine years ago," explained Audrey. " He married a very nice girl-a great friend of mineand went to Canada. He used to write at first and urge me to go out to him, but I could not leave father.'

Tremaine inclined his head. The simple words "I could not leave father "-what an epitome they were of a woman's loyalty, a woman's courage, long-suffering, and incredible love! Yes, she loved the old scoundrel still. Look and touch and voice had shown him that a score of times.

Audrey had sacrificed her life to this this unlovely bundle of depravity. She had worked while Seymour Maitland had boasted and shirked, gambled and drank. who in generosity had given Tremaine her girlish savings twenty years before, had given her youth and her happiness to the father who had proved so unworthy of the sacrifice.

Tremaine looked at her. She sat with bowed head, the hands that had accomplished so much idle for once in her lap, every line of her thin yet graceful figure expressive of weariness and dejection. The long dark lashes rested on etiolated cheeks; there were lines of grey in the soft brown Yet Audrey was still beautiful—to Tremaine the most beautiful woman he had ever seen.

Some words from an old play, "A good woman is an understudy for an angel," sprang into his mind as he stood up and held out his hand.

"Miss Maitland," he said gently, "you have had to tread a terribly hard road, but

now the end is in sight, and-""

He broke off, startled by a strange cry from Mr. Maitland. The old man, half risen from his chair, his hands flung out, was staring straight before him. His pallid face was convulsed

"Westerns!" he cried. "Dropped ten points . . . Fifteen points, by Heavens, and falling—falling—falling—"

With a strangled gasp he fell back.

Audrey's arms were about him as Tremaine ran to the door and, shouting for Mrs. Galloway, sent her flying for the nearest doctor.

She returned within five minutes, and the doctor—a young man—talked profoundly of cirrhosis of the liver and cardiac enlarge-

ment. But he could do nothing for the patient. Seymour Maitland had already passed into the hands of the Great Physician.

"You were right, Mr. Tremaine," said Audrey. "And I may be wicked, but I cannot help being glad--glad that at last it has come-to an end."

They were once more in the narrow, draughty passage, where the lamp flickered

dangerously. Tremaine took the girl's hand. "Wicked!" he echoed, with something like a sob. "I say thank God most devoutly that this chapter of your life has ended! You begin another and a happier one to-night-now."

The girl looked at him strangely. "What

do you mean?" she asked.

"I mean that you are coming back to the hotel at once," replied Tremaine decisively. "Ethel will be wondering why I am so late. Can't you guess how overjoyed she will be to see you—at last? Can't you guess how my little sister has longed to thank you for giving her health and life?"

Audrey covered her face with her hands. "No!" she said in great agitation. "No,

no! It is impossible!"

"With regard to Mr. Maitland," went on Tremaine composedly, "I will, of course, make all the necessary arrangements. You must tell me your wishes to-morrow or later in the week."

"But—but you are—going back to-

morrow," murmured Audrey.

"I have altered my arrangements," was Tremaine's rejoinder. "I shall return to Australia in a week's time, and you, my dear Audrey, will come with me."

Audrey, her face hidden, repeated that it was impossible; so Tremaine took possession of her hands, and when she looked into his steady grey eyes, she knew it was not only possible, but inevitable.

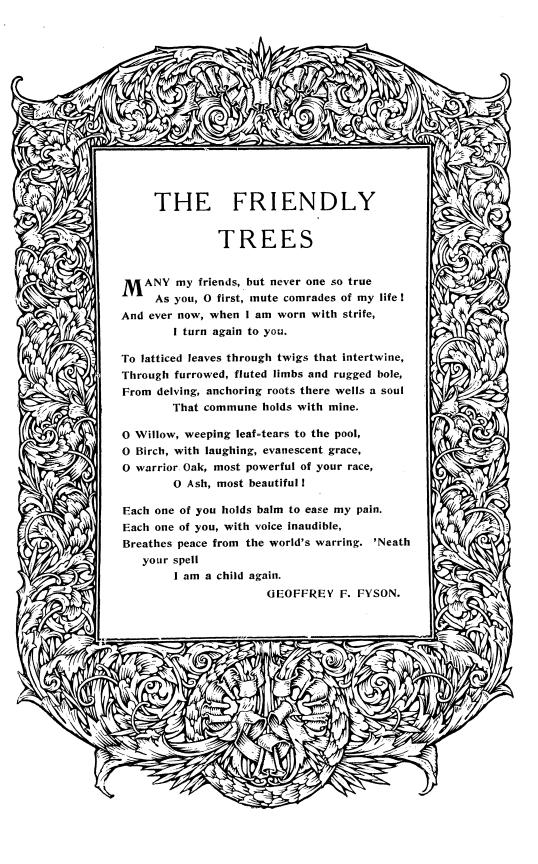
"But—but—why?" she murmured

weakly.

"Because I love you, Audrey," said Tremaine. "I did not know it until to-night, but I have loved you for twenty years. And for twenty years I have been in your debt. For the rest of my life I am going to see if I can make adequate payment. Do you think I shall manage it ? '

Audrey Maitland said nothing, but her eyes were eloquent. So Tremaine paid the first instalment, and they went out together

beneath the stars.



WHAT HAPPENED TO HAMILTON

EDGAR WALLACE

Author of "Sanders of the River," "The People of the River," "Bones," "The Keepers of the King's Peace," elc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN, A.R.A.

VERY man gifted with imagination has speculated upon the manner in which he would meet the great moment of his dissolution. It is an idle speculation for nine hundred and ninetynine out of every thousand, since death at the end has no terrors and excites

Hamilton of the Haussas had stood before the narrow slit of the Old Woman's cave, and had bent his head and gone in, believing that the end had come. And he had closed his eyes before the flashing blade of the sword. His last vision had been of a monstrous shape that eyed him furtively, as he thought, behind a fringe of grass tassels. Then he had heard the slash and thud of the sword,

and his knees had given way. A swoon may last for an hour or the

fraction of a second. Before Hamilton's knees had touched the ground, he had instinctively thrown out a foot to save himself, and he was not dead. He felt something shiver against his foot, and looked down. There was sufficient light in the cave to see clearly. The kid which was part of the sacrifice was dead, kicking its last as he looked. And then his eyes slowly travelled in the direction of the cave entrance. He saw the Old Woman, watched her caperings, saw the swing of her bloody sword, and then she came back slowly and stood before him, waiting.

"O woman, end this," said Hamilton in Bomongo, but still she did not speak. He thought she was watching the entrance of the cave, and he turned again and saw the backs of the departing soldiers. Then she went behind him, and he felt her cutting at

the ropes which bound him. In a second he was free, and his hand dropped on the revolver at his belt.

"I'm so sorry to have scared you," said a voice in English, and he stepped back,

The hands with their leopard-skin gloves went up and lifted the cage-like structure from her head, and he saw a head such as he had never dreamt of seeing in any land, and never in the wildest delirium of fever had expected to see in the Old King's country. The hair was dull gold, the calm, beautiful face was perfect in shape and colouring. And then he recognised her and fell back a pace.

"Diana Ferguson!" he breathed, and she nodded slowly, peeling off her leopard-skin

gloves.

"Don't speak loudly," she said in a low voice. "Wait, and I will take you to a safe

She had stripped off her gloves and unfastened the straw jacket which reached to her feet, and put it carefully by one of the walls, and it was so stiff and heavy that it stood of itself. Then she unfastened her hair, which was bunched on the top of her head, and shook it loose, and it fell in a billow of gold over her shoulders.

Hamilton could only stare stupidly at the girl, and had eyes for nothing else. Then she took his hand to guide him, and he followed her over the uneven floor of the cave and along a zigzag passage which was in complete darkness.

He guessed that she was finding her way by touching the wall, for she walked along without hesitation; and after a while he saw a dim light ahead, which proved to be the reflected light from a fire which was burning in the principal chamber of the cave.

It was an immense cavern, the roof of which, he judged, was a hundred feet high. The floor space was a rough oval—he afterwards measured it—of eighty feet at its longest and forty-five feet at its widest. The walls rose almost perpendicularly, and at one side ran a flight of steps roughly hewn, the end of which he could not see in the gloom. Another thing he noticed was that the smoke rose straight, and the air was sweet and good. In the wall opposite to the "stairway" were two deep alcoves, and in one of these was a native hut deeply thatched, and he wondered whether the Old Woman or the girl had erected this, and just why this additional privacy was necessary.

Diana Ferguson was looking at him curiously, and coloured when his eyes met

hers.

"You are the first white man I have seen for five years," said she, with a little catch in her voice. "The first strange white man, I mean."

"I am dazed," smiled Hamilton. "I

suppose I'm not dreaming."

She answered with a smile of peculiar

sweetness.

"You don't know what a relief it is to me that you are here," she said. "I did try so hard to catch all three of you, and I marked Mr. Sanders—"

" You ? "

She shook her head.

"My poor girl did that. They call her tchu. She was a girl who had been marked for death by the king years ago. Do you feel hungry?" she asked. "I have food here."

"I am hungry for information," he laughed, "and I am mystified beyond words. Tell me first, is the Old Woman here?"

She shook her head.

"I am the Old Woman," she said simply. And then Hamilton jumped, for a feeble voice called "Diana!"

"Who's that?" he said, starting to his

She laid her hand on his arm and smiled. "My father," she said, and went into the hut.

She was gone for some time, and when she returned there was a worried frown on her face.

"Father is very ill," she said. "He has been ill for some time."

"Your father?" he repeated incredulously. "Surely he was——"

"I'll tell you the whole story," she said, and settled down on a rug by the fire.

She seemed unconscious of the scantiness of her attire, for the thin dress she wore left her shoulders bare, and the skirt was little longer than a kilt.

"We were marked for destruction, you

know--have you seen my mother?"

Hamilton nodded.

"Is she well?" asked the girl quickly, and when he replied in the affirmative, "Thank God!" she said. "I'm so worried that I didn't ask, though of course I knew she escaped, and I prayed that she had not gone mad under the strain. We had a mission, as you know, and we were really doing good work until the Old Woman grew jealous of father's influence and demanded our lives from the king. We had no idea that there was any danger-though on of the servants had given us a half warningand the first intimation we had that anything was wrong was when Mofolobo, the king's hunter, came into the hut while we were at breakfast, and, without any warning, struck at my father. Father managed to avoid the blow, and what followed seems like a bad dream. I saw them struggling in the hut, and I saw mother running towards the river. And then Mofolobo came out with such an evil look on his face that my blood turned to ice. I was paralysed for a moment, and then turned and ran, Mofolobo following me. I flew into the woods, and I heard him coming after me. I was very agile in those days and could climb a tree like a cat. I can still climb," she said, with a half smile, "but I don't think I would dare do the things I did

"There were several big, bushy trees with low branches, and, seizing an opportunity when I was out of sight of him, I leapt up, caught the lowest branch, and drew myself up and out of sight, crouching against the trunk and clasping it tightly, praying that the movement of the leaves would not betray me. Fortunately there was a wind blowing that day, and Mofolobo passed me by. I remained still, and presently he came back, looking at the path, and apparently puzzled, for I heard him talking to himself. He could track me to the spot where the branch crosses the path, but after that the trail was broken. I don't know why he did not think of looking into the tree, and once I think he did glance up, but

dismissed the possibility of my hiding there as being an unlikely one. I heard him thrashing the bushes with his spear, and once I heard a scream, and my heart came into my mouth; but it seems that Mofolobo must have detected something crouching in the low grass and have speared it, only to find that it was a monkey. It was a monkey's cry I heard."

Hamilton nodded.

"That is why he cleaned his spear," he said.

"Did he? Then you know-" began

the girl.

"I know nothing," said Hamilton, "except that he was seen coming out of the

wood cleaning his spear."

"When night fell," said the girl, "I went on through the wood, hoping to reach the river and find a canoe in which I could get through Hell's Gate to the Ochori Country, where I knew Mr. Sanders, the Commissioner, was. But I must have lost my bearings in the dark, and wandered on, and nearly walked into a village.

"That would have been fatal, for the Old Woman's word had gone out, and I knew I should be captured. I could not depend upon even the most devout of our converts. For three days and nights I travelled, and one morning at daybreak I found myself on the northern slopes of Mount Limpisi. I had heard of the terrible

Old Woman, and I knew, of course, that if I fell into her clutches there was small hope

for my life.

"That night I managed to make my way to the far side of the mountain, which country people think is haunted. Beyond the mountain, as you know, is a desert, where wild animals abound and where it would be almost impossible to find food. The north side of the mountain is pitted with holes and caves, but these, I found, were mostly used as lairs by wild animals, and I had a narrow escape from a leopard

mother whom I had disturbed. "Food was the greatest difficulty; of

water there was plenty, for the northern hills abound in streams. I had been living on nuts, and I had got a supply of these tied up in the apron I was wearing. To these I added a bunch of bananas which I had stolen from a native garden on the outskirts of one of the villages, and this was sufficient to sustain me whilst I explored the hill. For I knew that, even if I found a likely hidingplace, I should have to go at least once a week into the populated country to get my

food, for on the hill there are no trees but

junipers and pines.

"I suppose I was a thousand feet up the hill when I discovered what looked to me like a likely cave. I went in carefully, listening and smelling "—she smiled—" but there was no beast smell. And I found myself in what reminded me of a mine gallery—we came from a mining district in Wales. I found the passage, which was perfectly straight, but sloped downwards, and the light from the opening was sufficient to enable me to find my way. But presently this failed, and I stopped. I hadn't the courage to go on in the dark, for I did not know where the

passage led to.

"I was on the point of turning back, when I heard a faint sound ahead of me—the sound as though somebody was striking the rock with a stick. I thought that in the darkness I could not be detected, and, though I was dreadfully frightened, I determined to go on a little farther. I walked half a dozen paces down the incline, and then, reaching out my foot, I felt I was stepping into the air, and drew back, half dead with fright. I lay flat on the ground and reached down, and it was very ridiculous, for what I had thought was the edge of a precipice was really a step. Less than a foot down I found firm foothold. This, too, terminated abruptly, and again I investigated, this time with my foot, to find another ledge and I realised that I was on a man-made stairway. That is it." She pointed up to the wall of the cave. "There are five hundred of those steps," she said, and Hamilton "Father thinks they must have been made thousands of years ago, and that this was a mine chamber. He has found garnets and little diamonds here, but nothing of any value But I must tell you what happened," she went on.

"It was very slow progress I made, for I was in fear that there might be a break in the steps, and I had to test every one before I put my weight upon it. After an awful long time —it seemed a whole day—I saw a glimmer of light at the end, which was sufficient, at any rate, to show me the stairs and enable me to move more quickly. Then, as the light grew stronger, I became cautious. Fortunately I was wearing a pair of rubbersoled shoes that made no sound, but the stairs were so littered with stones that the danger of making some sort of sound was

a very grave one.

"After a while I came in sight of this cave, and when I looked down I nearly

swooned, for there, seated before a fire, was the most awful woman I have ever seen. I think the Woman of Limbi must have been a hundred years old."

Hamilton nodded.

"She was terribly thin, and I could count every rib from where I stood. She sat before the fire, crooning and talking to herself, swaying backwards and forwards like a demented thing; and I am sure she was mad, and must have been mad for many years. I hardly dared draw breath, but, pressed close to the wall, I peeped down at her. And at that moment I really had a fear that she might be possessed of supernatural powers.

"After a long time she got up from the fire and went out through the passage-way to the entrance to the cave. She had been roasting a chicken, and it was laid on a leaf by the side of the fire, and the smell of the food was maddening, for I was half starving. I could hear the shuffle of her feet growing fainter, and then I grew bold. I knew I was strong enough to overcome that puny old creature, and the only danger was that she might have some attendants within call. I risked that, and, running down the remainder of the steps, I snatched up the food and ate ravenously. I am afraid I was an awful pig," she added naïvely, and Hamilton chuckled.

"The Old Woman did not return, and, once my appetite was satisfied, I fell into a panic. I looked round this room and saw, against one of the walls, a heap of swords. You know that every sacrifice that comes to the cave brings his own sword?"

Hamilton nodded.

"I didn't hesitate. I took up the smallest and drew it. It was awful." She shuddered. "The blade was rusted with blood, but at the time this did not trouble me. I listened, and there was no sound. And then I crept along the dark passage where I led you into the outer cave. By this time my eyes had got accustomed to the gloom, and there was no difficulty in finding my way. I came stealthily into the outer cave, expecting every minute to see the Old Woman's horrible face; but as I turned the corner I heard her squeaking, and, putting my head round, I saw the back of her standing at the entrance to the cave, haranguing the soldiers, who had evidently brought a victim.

"The sacrifice was a girl, younger than I, and the poor thing was howling most dismally. Her hands were strapped behind

her, and she carried a sword at her waist, and the little goat was fastened by a rope to her neck, as yours was. I don't know what it was, but at the sight of that wretched victim, something inside me boiled up. The Old Woman backed into the cave and stood ready to receive the shrinking girl, who came sobbing toward her. Then, as the Old Woman brought up her sword, I struck at her."

Again she shuddered and covered her face.

"It was terrible, but I didn't realise how terrible it was till long after. She dropped like a stone, and I think I must have killed her instantaneously. I grabbed the girl by the hand and pushed her into the passage, and then I realised—for I had heard about the custom of the Old Woman-that the soldiers were waiting to 'feel blood.' was horror-stricken. If the woman did not go out, I thought they might have come in. There was nothing else to do. I lifted the head-dress of the Öld Woman of Limbi, and with trembling fingers I undid her straw I won't ask you to imagine my feelings when I put on that terrible hat of hers and fastened the cloak round me. The straw seemed to clutch my arms. But, as it happened, nothing could have been better, for, by stooping slightly, I could make the dress reach the ground, and the leopard paws which she wore on her hands hid the fact that my hands were white.

"I picked up the sword and, going to the entrance of the cave, I sprinkled the people, and must have been on the verge of collapse, for when I came back I fainted. I got rid of the dress and went in search of the sacrifice. I found her sitting by the fire, shivering. Like all native girls, she was stupid, and it took me hours to explain that she was not going to be killed. When I told her that I had killed the Old Woman of Limbi, I thought she would have died with hourser."

would have died with horror."

"She was your tchu!" said Hamilton, with sudden realisation.

Diana nodded.

"The Old Woman used to have a familiar, who would scare people who had been brought to her cave with the death mark, and they would act as her messengers until the mad old thing would chop her companion and take another. You don't know how many weeks it took me to convince this girl that she would not share the fate of her predecessors. Afterwards she became most devoted, and was the dearest, kindest



"And then he recognised her."

thing--" Her voice broke. "She died last week," she said simply.

"Then she came to mark us?" asked

Hamilton.

'Yes, I sent her, knowing that she would be immune and would not be molested. She carried a message, which apparently you did not get. She left it on Mr. Sanders's desk, I gathered."

"And Mofolobo found it there when he came in with his soldiers to the city," said

Hamilton. "But your father?"

"That came later," said the girl. "Two days after I had taken up my residence in the cave, and had managed to clean the Old Woman's dress so that it was at least wearable, I heard a hubbub at the mouth of the cave, and went there, to find my father. Of course I was wearing the straw coat and the mask, and he did not recognise me, and it broke my heart even to pretend that I was going to hurt him. This time I had to find blood, and the kid which came as part of the sacrifice was the unfortunate little victim. Ugh!

"Father was quite demented with fever and the ill-treatment he had received, and that made things easier. He told me afterwards that he did not recollect being brought to the cave, and knew nothing until he

woke up and found himself here.

Hamilton asked her about Kufusu, the messenger whose head had been sent to Sanders.

"I know nothing of him," she said. "The guard settle matters like that—in the interest of the Old Woman," she said, with

a grimace.

She got up quickly and turned towards the hut. There was standing in the doorway a grey-haired man in a ragged shirt and trousers, who looked at Hamilton with a queer little smile. The girl was at his side, and, drawing his arm round her shoulder, she supported him to the fire.

"Major Hamilton?" said the old man. "I met you, I think, when I came through

your territory years ago."

"I remember you quite well, sir," said

Hamilton.

"You have seen my wife?" said the missionary anxiously, and Hamilton told what news he could of the distracted woman who had come to the Commissioner's house on a memorable night.

"Thank God, she's safe!" said the missionary quietly. "I have tried to get word through, but it has been impossible. I am without writing materials, and the only

method of communication I have foundand that hasn't proved very effective—has been to write on wood with a burnt stick. How we shall manage now that poor Lazai is dead, I do not know," he said.

"How do you manage about food?"

asked Hamilton.

"It comes regularly. One of the guard brings it and leaves it in the entrance of the hut every morning. Of late we have had a great deal of goats' milk. I am afraid this is going to be a trying time for you, Major Hamilton."

"Is there no chance of escaping by the way you came in?" asked Hamilton, and

the girl shook her head.

"You may get to the north side of the hill," she said, "but since I came, new villages have sprung up on each side, and it is quite impossible to reach the river without passing through the village, and

that is one of the guard's posts."

Hamilton slept that night by the fire, and early the next morning he made a reconnaissance of the stairway, up which, he learnt, the tchu had reached the outer world. From the hill slope he looked across a barren desert to a low range of mountains which might have been fifty miles away, such was the clearness of the desert atmosphere. And then he walked down one side of the hill, and had not gone far before he came within sight of the guard village and the flowing river beyond.

The next day he made a reconnaissance in the other direction, without any greater success, though he might have broken through alone, for he had his two pistols and a reserve of ammunition; but that would mean leaving the girl and her father alone, and he suspected that the old man

was nearing his end.

One night, after Hamilton had been in the cave a week, Mr. Ferguson had a bad heart attack, and Hamilton thought that it was all over. But the old man rallied surprisingly, though his recovery, Hamilton was certain, could only be temporary. Ferguson himself had no doubt as to this, nor had the girl, for whose quiet courage and cheerfulness Hamilton's admiration was reaching a more tender phase.

"I am afraid," she said one night, her hands gripped together in an agony of sorrow. "If we only had medicine!"

Hamilton groaned.

"I have a medicine-chest in my cabin." he said. "That is the maddening thought."

He thought all one afternoon, sitting on

the hillside and watching two leopards at play on the plain below, and then an inspiration came to him, and he went down the steps into the cave.

"Who carries out your orders, Diana?" he asked. He had reached the stage of friendship where the conventional prefix

seemed absurd.

"O man," she said in Bomongo, with a pathetic attempt at pleasantry, "all men

obey me!"

"But tell me, Diana, suppose you wanted something done? Suppose you wanted

Sanders caught?"

"I should send for Okaso," she said.
"Why? Do you wish him captured? I am afraid he will be more difficult than you."

"Would Okaso carry out any instructions

you gave him?"

"For the moment, yes," she said.

"Now, listen to me," said Hamilton, and instructed her minutely.

Hope showed in the girl's face.

"He may fail," she said. "The natives are rather clumsy when they are dealing with civilised things. Is this the key of your cabin? Isn't it curious I haven't seen a key for years?"

She held it in her hand for a moment, then went into the outer cave and donned her grass cloak and head-dress. The guard of virgins saw the Old Woman standing in the entrance to the cave, and one ran toward her, flinging herself upon her face.

"Send for Okaso," said the girl, and Okaso came before sundown and pros-

trated himself.

"O Okaso, captain of my guard," said the girl in shrill Bomongo, "take this devil thing which I give to you, and tell one who is very cunning to go to Rimi-Rimi. First he shall buy one of the grey birds that moan from the white man Sandi; and if Sandi will not sell, though you offer a very precious price, let one be stolen; for my spirit has told me that I must make a sacrifice of a grey bird."

"O Devil Woman," said Okaso, "this

shall be.''

"Take this also, Okaso, my servant," said Diana, and flung the key down by the side of his face. "On the big white canoe where the white men dwell are three houses of wood. This devil thing which I give you shall be put in a certain hole in the middle door and turned, and then will the door open by magic, and whosoever goes will pass in. And there he shall find a great box, and he shall break it open, and take from

there a box which is of the colour of a banana when it is fully ripe. And that and the grey bird you shall bring to me."

the grey bird you shall bring to me."
"Lady, this shall be," said Okaso. "But
my head is full of holes, so, Holy One, say
over again all you have told me."

Twice and a third time she repeated her instructions, and Okaso took the key in his hand and was going down the hill, when she called him. An idea came to her on the spur of the moment. She would never have dared this, but for the courage and confidence Hamilton's presence had brought.

"O Okaso, this, too, is my order—that you shall take all your soldiers and go to

Rimi-Rimi."

"Lady, is it war?" he asked eagerly.

" For this my young men desire."

"It is war, but the white man's war, for he goes against the Tofolaka, which have put shame on me."

He stood petrified with astonishment.

"Lady, must I join the white man and the new king?"

"It is my order," she said, and he turned

and walked down the hill.

"You wonderful girl!" said Hamilton. "We can give your father a new lease of life if we can get my medicine-chest. And if the pigeons come, Diana, our imprisonment is over, for I can get a message through to Sanders."

That night Mr. Ferguson was taken ill again, and when he had recovered he sent

Diana away.

"Hamilton," he said in a weak voice,

"I do not think I have long to live."

"Don't say that, sir," said Hamilton, with a cheerfulness he was far from feeling, and the old man did not speak for some time.

"Hamilton," he said at last, "I am worried about Diana. I am leaving her here—with you—and Heaven knows when you can get away."

"I hope we shall all get away soon,"

said Hamilton quietly.

"I have hoped that for five years," said the missionary, with a faint smile. "But if you do not, and you are kept a prisoner here—you and Diana—it does not seem to me possible that you can avoid loving her."

Hamilton's heart gave a leap, and the old man must have read something in his

eyes.

"Or she you," he said slowly, "for she is a young and loving girl." He stopped. "Are you married?" he asked, with an effort.

"No, sir," said Hamilton.
"Would you—marry Diana? understand what I mean, Hamilton? You you escape from here after being for years with my daughter-it would not be well

" I quite understand that, sir, and I shall be happy to marry Diana if --- Why, you could marry us," he said suddenly, and Mr.

Ferguson nodded.

"I thought that," he said. "That was

what I meant.'

And there in the cave, by the light of the fire that night, a dying clergyman married them-Hamilton of the Haussas and the Devil Woman of Limbi. That night the girl went into the hut to take her father some food and found him sleeping. She went back again an hour later, and came out white of face and sobbed her grief on Hamilton's shoulder.

They buried Mr. Ferguson in a cavern and there were many—in one of the side passages of the outer cave, and he had been dead two days when the servant of Okaso fell at the mouth of the cave with a pigeon in one hand and a medicine-chest in the other.

The medicine-chest was useless now, but the pigeon was good. Hamilton stroked the pretty head of the bird, thinking the while.

"You know this country ever so better than I, Diana," he said. "What chance is there of our escaping, suppose we reached the river?"

She thought a moment.

"If we could get past the big fishing village Tonkini, which is just north of Hell's Gate, we are safe," she said. "But there are always soldiers patrolling those waters in their canoes, and I think they are kept there for the purpose of arresting fugitives. You must have seen the village as you passed."

"We came by in the dark," said Hamilton, with a little smile, "and certainly they

would not have stopped us."

He wrote his message and threw the bird, and not until it was on its way did he tell the girl what that message had been.

"We leave here in four days," he said,

and she stared at him.

"It is impossible! How can you-"

"I can push my way through the village," said Hamilton, " and this is my plan."

His plan was a simple one. He himself would walk boldly to the village and shoot down opposition. He would take a canoe and begin a leisurely journey. Afterwards the girl must come in her Old Woman's dress and must pursue him, ordering the guards to follow—and guards there were certain to be, for Okaso would leave a considerable detachment for her protection.

"They will keep a respectable distance from you," said Hamilton, "and you can regulate your distance from me, and give us both a much easier time than if we were together. For once they suspected you were white, and had killed the Old Woman of Limbi, every village would send its canoes

to intercept you."

Everything fell out as he had arranged, except that they left in the evening instead of the morning, and the opposition at the village had been surprisingly slight. They were twenty miles from safety when a puff of wind had taken out Diana's straw mask, and men had seen the golden hair and the white face, although she had replaced the head-dress immediately. But because they believed her gifted with divine power to change herself into whatsoever she wished, their suspicions did not take shape until they had reached the bend of the river which hid them from the Zaire; and then, when Hamilton increased his speed and Diana followed suit, it broke upon their dull minds that they had been tricked, and the long war canoes swept forward at double pace till a shell from the Zaire checked the pursuit with disconcerting suddenness.

Two months later a party of four breakfasted at Read's Hotel, overlooking the Bay of Funchal, and they were in holiday mood, for the Coast boat, which had made a call at Madeira, was staying for twelve hours. They were grouped about a table set on a piled patio, and the glories of bougainvillæa and climbing roses and fragrant heliotrope were about them. Only Bones did not do justice to himself in that festive atmosphere, for he was a very thoughtful young man, and had been for some days.

"Ham," he asked in a hoarse whisper, "are you going to write the story of your experience in the cave and all that sort of

stuff, dear old thing?"

"I've told you twenty times, if I've told you once," said the patient Hamilton, "that I am not going to write anything about any adventures whatsoever.'

Bones looked round. With a furtive air of secrecy, though the conversation was audible to everyone at table:

"Do you mind if I write it, dear old thing?"

"I certainly object to your writing any-

thing about me," said Hamilton.

"Impetuous and modest one, I wasn't going to write it about you, my jolly old adventurer. I was going to write it about—do you mind if I describe my own adventures in the cave?"

"But you weren't there," said the indig-

nant Hamilton.

Bones made a tut-tut of annoyance.

"What I mean, dear old thing, is this," he said, "and I really am surprised that your jolly old brain hasn't received the impression before. My suggestion is that I should write of your adventures as my own. How does that strike you?"

"And how will you explain me?" asked

Diana Hamilton, and Bones was non plussed.

"H'm!" he coughed. "That would lead to complications, serious complications, jolly old Devil Lady."

"Why not"—it was Sanders who spoke
—"why not write the report for the League
of Nations, Bones?"

"That's an idea, sir," said Bones,

brightening up.

"And don't forget," said Hamilton, putting sugar in his coffee, "that League

is spelt with a 'u.'"

"It is wholly unnecessary to tell me that," said Bones. "I know it is spelt with a 'u'—L-E-E-G-U-E—League, dear old thing. And there is only one 'c' in 'Nations.' There are certain things I don't want tellin', Ham."

YOUTH.

THANK God for the sun and the wind, the rain and the dew!
They beat on the doors of the heart and they enter it too;
They sweep out the dust that has gathered with the labouring years,
And the chaff of ambition and pride that blossoms in tears.

They cry to the Child long asleep in the cells of the brain: "Awake to the music and magic in the woodlands again; The fields are as green and as gay as the day of your birth, And the kisses of winter and summer still cover the earth.

"The skies are as blue, the rivers as light on their feet;
The woods are as deep and as black and as balsamy sweet;
The hill-tops as high and as clean and as fresh with the wind
As the day that you entered your prison and shut them behind."

For the Child that was with us in youth is with us in age (How often you glimpse his white face at the bars of his cage!) You have only to strike off the chains, and once he is free He'll return to the lips of the clover and the breasts of the sea.

For only the sinews grow old and the dreams turn to dust; Only the tools of ambition grow blunted with rust. The toiler within? Oh, you have only to lower the bars To see that his youth is the Youth of the hills and the stars!

Thank God for the sun and the wind, the rocks and the trees; The plains and the woods and the skies, the rivers and seas; That open the doors of the heart to the spirit of Truth, Till our feet are aflame once again on the hill-tops of Youth!

LLOYD ROBERTS.

THE WITCH LADY

By ALICE GRANT ROSMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

P to the moment of that absurd adventure in the hotel at Durban, Dick Cameron would have told you he was the most peaceable chap alive; but there are limits, and when the man at the next table suddenly leant over and slapped the face of the girl who was dining with him, Cameron, a total stranger to both of them, completely lost his head.

Perhaps it would be more correct to say that he alone in the crowded dining-room did nothing of the kind. At all events, he cleared the space between them in three seconds, and promptly knocked the offender down.

It was none of his business, of course. Until that evening he had never set eyes on either the girl or the man, but, on entering the room half an hour before, he had noticed that they were English, in the half-wistful way the exile does single out his fellow-countrymen in far places.

The man's clothes spoke of a London Cameron had not seen for three years. The girl, too, was essentially different, in her slender pink and whiteness, from the other women in the room, the rather flat-faced Dutch ladies and the smartly-gowned residents of the Berea, upon whom the suns of Africa had already laid a yellowing hand.

Cameron himself had come in from upcountry only that afternoon, and, looking down the long, white-pillared room, with its palms and flowers and crowded tables, he had decided, with a new excitement, that it was good to be back in civilisation.

The punkahs were swinging drowsily, and the long windows were open to the night that hung beyond them like a curtain of dim velvet silvered with a million stars. Among the tables the Zulu waiters moved, soft-footed, imperturbable, in their spotless turbans and uniforms and blazing scarlet sashes.

A picturesque background, these things, for the English girl's white shoulders and the soft contour of her face, which was all of it that Cameron had been able to see; but when the blow fell, he only knew that it was an alien background, and it was the obvious nationality of the two concerned that made him suddenly see red.

Of course he was in no state of mind to realise that or anything else at the moment. He simply hit out with all his strength, and was thereafter dimly aware that chaos descended upon him.

The other man stumbled to his feet, his heavy face livid and his language hardly fit for a mixed company. As he flew at Cameron, his chair crashed to the floor behind him, and a vase of flowers went over with a crash. Cameron, closing with him, was conscious of a confusion of whirling lights, of hot, strange dinner smells, of the threatening rush of many feet, of the other man's laboured breath, heavy with spirits, and the mean ugliness of his face. Then he, too, went down, and the water from the fallen vase trickled over the table edge into his eyes.

The thundering steps came on, and instinctively he put up his hands to shield his head. Somebody seized him, he fought violently, he was dragged to his feet, rushed through a maze of tables, past staring men and women, and flung out into the night.

He came to his senses in the quiet, tree-shadowed street. He had walked some little distance from the hotel, or possibly he had run. He was never by any means certain. His collar was burst open and his hair on end. He straightened them as well as he was able, and then, as a rickshaw came into view, with its fantastic, capering owner, he hailed it, and in a moment was speeding back to the bungalow on the Berea.

His host, and the bungalow's owner, had been called away from Durban unexpectedly that morning, which accounted for the guest's solitary dinner at the hotel, and now the guest was beginning to see that he had made a thundering fool of himself.

He had not the faintest idea what had become of the girl, but of course his interference had done her no good—quite

otherwise, perhaps, since it had drawn attention to her humiliation and made her the centre of what must have seemed

suspiciously like a drunken brawl.

Her companion, too, would be likely to make her pay for the scene in the subtle ways of his kind, and when Cameron thought of that, he almost turned back with some wild idea of a rescue. Then the cool wind blowing up from the harbour brought him to his senses, and he went on, swearing lustily at his own unaccountable loss of selfcontrol.

The rickshaw carried him smoothly up the hill to the Berea, and wound on high above the little city, wrapped in its mantle of tropic green. A thousand scents came out to him from the sleeping gardens, but he found no charm in all the alluring night. Hot anger surged in him, against the bullying brute in the hotel below, against himself for his inadequate interference, against this infernal country which he held responsible. He was suddenly homesick for the whirling traffic of Hyde Park Corner and Piccadilly, for Trafalgar Square, with its seductive vistas of Whitehall and the Mall, even for the dull, sedate lines of Oxford Street.

And then he glanced back and saw a string of golden lights that marked a liner at the wharf below-the English mail, of course. That would account for the couple

at the hotel.

It also carried them away to It did. Cape Town at dawn next morning, so it seemed that there was to be no sequel to Cameron's adventure.

It remained, however, the most spectacular incident of his career up to the time he went back to England, six years later, and was therefore, quite naturally, the thing he unearthed in his perverse desire to trip up the uncanny Mrs. Allison.

Helen Allison was a friend and neighbour of his sister and brother-in-law, Hilary and Tom Ward, to whose home in Buckinghamshire he went to loaf away a few months on

his arrival in England.

"When are you going to introduce Cameron to the witch lady?" Tom asked of Hilary the day after her brother's arrival. "By Jove, old worm, you'll have to look out, you know. She's a great hand at unmasking villains, and she'll tell you all your horrid past."

He and Hilary then launched into a duet about the wonderful Mrs. Allison for Dick

Cameron's benefit.

She was a young War widow who had

bought Dipplecourt, a couple of miles away. She had, Mrs. Ward declared, a most uncanny psychic gift, could tell you things about yourself that would simply make your hair stand on end, had become, in fact, during the few months of her residence there, the private seer of the neighbourhood.

"Great Scot!" said Cameron. "And I thought I was coming back to a sane

country!"

"Don't abuse your native land," said his sister in a shocked tone. "Sanity is so dull, besides being hopelessly old-fashioned. I can tell you Helen Allison is a jolly useful person. When new people come here now, we all consult her to see if they are likely to be acquisitions or otherwise, and she is always right."

"Worse and worse," protested Cameron. "People who are always right are the

deadliest bores I know."

"Never mind, old bean; I dare say she won't give you away," Tom chaffed him, and sauntered out of the room.

"But what does the woman do exactly?" "Does she Cameron asked his sister. pretend to go into trances, and all that stuff, or foretell the future, or what?"

"She doesn't pretend to do anything," declared Hilary, with the enthusiasm of the true devotee. "It just happens."

She proceeded to give him the history of Mrs. Allison's happenings, most of them ordinary enough, and easily to be explained by pure chance, allied, perhaps, to a dash of feminine intuition with some thoughtreading thrown in. Thought-reading, telepathy, that was the ticket, if there was anything in it at all, Cameron decided.

"It all began," Hilary continued her recital, "in such a funny way. Isabel Osborne-their place is next to Dipplecourt, you know-became engaged to a Major Bradish. We all liked him well enough, except that we thought him rather oldish and heavy for Isabel. But Helen Allison detested him from the first, and would never have much to say to him if she could help it. One day a crowd of us were talking on the Osbornes' lawn at tea, and Major Bradish was holding forth and arguing with Helen Allison, who was being flippant because she didn't like him. I don't know what the argument was exactly, but I know Major Bradish said in a pompous sort of way: 'I like to get to the root of things. I am always seeking the truth.' And Helen said, as quick as lightning: 'What a pity you have never found it!' Everyone was startled for a moment, and then we all shouted with laughter, because it was so absurd-rather like dignity and impudence, you know. But Major Bradish looked furious, and that night he went back to Town. A little while after—only a few weeks before the wedding -he broke off the engagement in the most callous way, treated Isabel very badly, in fact. Mrs. Allison had been perfectly right about him, and Isabel had a very lucky escape"

"Of course Mrs. Allison had known him or heard of him before?" Cameron suggested.

"Never! We asked her that, and then she admitted it was a sort of instinct she had about people. She didn't call it a psychic power, but of course that's what it is—a kind of clairvoyance. You can be as sceptical as you like, but it's no good denying that there are people like that, and Helen is really uncanny. The story got about, and everyone rushed after Helen to get her to do it for them, too. She's quite the most thrilling person we've all met

for years."
"Pooh!" said Cameron. "Chicanery!" He held obstinately to this explanation, even when he found that his brother-in-law, solid old Tom, believed, like the rest of

them, in Mrs. Allison's powers.

"Good Heavens, it must be the reaction from the War!" he said. "You've all developed an unnatural taste for excitement, and so you let the first charlatan that comes along provide it. I never knew such a credulous crowd."

"Wait till she begins to tell you things,

my boy," advised Tom.

"Oh, yes, beware of a dark lady, and all that kind of bosh. You're in great danger. You will receive an important letter. I've heard 'em before, but I've never seen 'em

received in people's houses."

They were dining with the Osbornes that night, and his sister informed him the wonderful Mrs. Allison would most certainly be there. Cameron felt curious and faintly amused at the prospect. If, as he suspected, she was a humbug, it occurred to him that her friendship with Hilary was both dangerous and undesirable, because Hilary always had been far too ready to believe in people. There was, however, just a chance that she was sincere in her foolery, and that a genuine gift for thought-reading had led her to imagine herself psychic. Since he was a stranger to her, it ought to be fairly easy to test that. Of course she would have heard a great deal about him from Hilary,

but there were things even Hilary didn't know. He thought suddenly of that scene at the hotel in Durban, and decided it was an inspiration. He would concentrate his mind upon it when he was with the uncanny Mrs. Allison, and see if she would rise to

"You're going to take her in to dinner," Hilary whispered to him, as they entered the Osbornes' drawing-room that evening. "Isabel's just told me. Oh, and there she

A few minutes later, in the middle of friendly greetings from old and new acquaintances, Cameron heard his sister's voice introducing them, and turned to find himself gazing into a pair of curiously steady grey

eyes.

The newcomer gave him a searching, almost a defensive look, but Cameron's amused reflection that she was taking stock of him soon gave way to a sensation of very real pleasure and delight. The girl—for she was little more—was certainly charming, slender, graceful, and rather tall, exquisite in her frock of shimmering blue, smiling a little as though not yet quite certain of

"I've heard so much about you from your sister," she said, and there was an odd note of nervousness in her voice.

Cameron turned upon Hilary a reproachful

"Ah," he said, " no wonder you promised me Mrs. Allison would be able to tell me all my lurid past."
"Even though

you haven't one,"

finished Mrs. Allison.

"Now, is that," he asked her, raising quizzical eyebrows, "mere politeness or necromancy? You see, I also know something about you."

" It's fact, isn't it?" said the girl.

"A very neat evasion."

For some reason which Cameron could not explain, Mrs. Allison coloured, and a moment later moved on to speak to other friends. Cameron watched her pleasurably from the background, and it came over him for the first time how good a thing it was to be back at last in this leisurely English countryside, among the people of his own kind. He supposed it was the clannish instinct—the same that had once moved him to punch the head of a complete stranger.

He smiled when he thought of that, because, after all, he had forgotten to concentrate upon it when he met Mrs. Allison.



"Trespassing? Of course you're trespassing!' exclaimed the girl, stamping. 'Surely you've done quite enough harm already!'"

Never mind; perhaps he would have an

opportunity at dinner.

He could see her talking to Isabel Osborne now beside the long windows, and then Isabel detached herself, left the room, and, returning, collected a girl he had not met before, and introduced his dinner partner.

"But I thought," he heard Hilary say, in a low, surprised voice to Isabel, "he

was to take in-"

"I know," said Miss Osborne, "but I

muddled things. So sorry, dear."

Cameron was certain she had done nothing of the kind—certain, too, that Mrs. Allison herself was responsible for the change. He was extraordinarily disappointed, a little presently very much chagrined, and amused.

"Of course she's afraid," he reflected; "she knows I will see through her. But she must be an amazingly good judge of character. No doubt that's the real secret

of it."

Hilary, however, was not going to leave it at that, and, after dinner, contrived to bring Helen Allison and her brother together

"You know I rely upon you to give Dick a good character," she said gaily to her "We have been telling him how important that is, and how the whole county hangs on your words."

The girl gave Cameron another of her

defensive glances.

"I'm sure he would think it an impertinence for me to give him a character of any kind," she said.

Cameron retorted, with an amused smile: "You make me nervous. I am beginning to suspect that I shall fail to pass the

censor.

"There! He is laughing at you," protested Hilary, "and we can't allow that. Please tell him something about himself immediately, and put him in his place."

"I Isabel is calling me," said Mrs.

Allison.

"It's all your fault, Dick," Hilary scolded, going home. "You jeered at her. Oh, not in so many words, perhaps, but your expression. And psychic people are always put off by sceptics. I've often heard that."

"Pooh!" said Cameron. "Your witch lady is afraid I'll see through her That's all. I shouldn't mind betting she is going

to keep out of my way."

This prophecy seemed likely to be fulfilled as the week wore on, for on the next afternoon Mrs. Allison had arranged to have tea with the Wards, but at the last moment sent a note of apology to say that she was not well. A day or two later the Wards and Cameron were having luncheon with friends on the other side of Dipplecourt, and here, too, Mrs. Allison, an expected guest, failed to put in an appearance.

"I told her you were bringing your brother over," said the hostess to Hilary. "Something must have detained her, I

suppose."
"Perhaps she is ill again," suggested Hilary, but another guest protested—

"She was quite well this morning, for

I saw her in the village."

Cameron was still inclined to be amused at Mrs. Allison's determined efforts to avoid him, especially when he discovered how seriously his sister regarded the matter. Hilary, indeed, was very angry, all her loyalty to her brother up in arms. She had always been a partisan, and her real affection for Helen Allison measured her indignation

"It's perfectly outrageous of her," she said to Dick, "and such a reflection upon

you. I can tell you I am furious."

"My dear infant, if my reputation can't survive the dislike of a complete stranger, it isn't worth very much," protested

Cameron indulgently.

"That's all very well, but you don't seem to realise how seriously everybody takes her opinions. There has been only one other man she avoided like this, and that was Major Bradish. And you know what a scoundrel he turned out to be. Don't you see the implication? I do, and I object to it most strongly."

Hilary had worked herself up into such a state of indignation that when at last, by chance, they did meet Mrs. Allison at a friend's house, she treated her with icy hostility, and the other girl very soon took

the opportunity to slip away.

"Why, whatever can be the matter with Mrs. Allison?" the hostess not unnaturally wondered.

And Hilary, going home, said fiercely to her brother: "There! People are beginning

to notice it already, you see."

It was no good pointing out that her own behaviour, and not Mrs. Allison's, had been responsible for anything that people might have noticed on that occasion, so Cameron said nothing. In his years abroad he had lost his bearings a little, and he had forgotten how easily molehills become mountains in a community where people have nothing to do and too much time to do it in.

He left his sister at her own gates and went off for a solitary tramp through the woods, deciding, not very profoundly, that the ways of women were beyond him.

Autumn had dressed the world of England in a mantle of scarlet and gold, and Cameron felt his youth renewed at the soft swish of the burnished leaves under his feet and the glory of the flaming beeches all around him. After the heavy atmosphere of the tropics, this cool, clean, windy day set his pulses leaping, and once more he thanked his stars that he had come home for good.

There was no purpose and therefore no particular direction in his walk, but presently he came in sight, through a long vista of trees, of an old grey house that, for the moment, was not familiar to him. Standing four-square on age-old turf, it seemed from this aspect to be almost walking into the wood, but, as he drew nearer, Cameron saw the gardens beyond it, and realised that it was Dipplecourt, which he had hitherto seen only from the road.

"By Jove! She has taste in houses, anyway," he told himself, and felt pleased at

the discovery.

As a matter of fact, his initial attraction to Helen Allison had been rather enhanced than otherwise by Hilary's anger against her, and to-day it had seemed to him that she had looked forlorn and not a little reproachful.

" Really, this is too much!"

Cameron started, and, looking round, found himself face to face with the object of his thoughts. Sitting on an old stump under the trees, she had been unable to see him as he approached, and his sudden appearance brought her angrily to her feet. Her cheeks were scarlet and her eyes blazing, and Cameron took off his hat in a kind of helpless amazement.

"I'm—I'm awfully sorry, Mrs Allison," he apologised. "I'm afraid I must be

trespassing."

"Trespassing? Of course you're trespassing!" exclaimed the girl, stamping. "Surely you've done quite enough harm

already!

"Good Heavens, but what have I done?" Cameron was still in a maze. " As far as the trespassing goes," he continued, "you really must forgive me. I don't know my way about properly yet, and had no idea where I was, but beyond that-"

"Oh," said the girl, "what is the use of

denying it? Do you think I don't know? If you hadn't told Hilary, she would never have treated me like that."

She threw up her head defiantly and her

voice shook.

"I've been here two years," she said, " and been happy for the first time in ten. They have all been so decent to me. They've even liked me, and let me amuse them, and now you come—and spoil it all. What did I ever do to you?"

The last words were flung at him as she walked indignantly away, and Cameron sat down on the stump she had left and swore.

"They're all mad," he said to himself at last, "stark, staring mad! This psychic

nonsense has gone to their heads."

It was evident, then, that Mrs. Allison had been humbugging the county, and now imagined, from Hilary's coldness, that he had given her away. But why should she suppose they would all take his word against hers? The whole thing was idiotic.

The fact remained, however, that he, all unwittingly, had broken up the friendship between Mrs. Allison and his sister, and that the longer he remained there, the wider the breach was likely to become, because Hilary was in no mood to see reason. Very well, then, the best thing he could do was to be called suddenly back to Town.

As he tramped off to the village to send himself the necessary telegram, he decided that women were the very devil, and that to stav down there and not meet Helen Allison would certainly bore him to tears.

Dick Cameron, however, was not the only person who decided to run away, and therefore next morning, when he reached Dipplecourt and fell into the train for London, just as it was pulling out of the station, he was horrified to find himself sitting opposite to Mrs. Allison.

She could hardly cut him at such close quarters, but she did her best, moving, after her curt little nod, to the other end of the carriage. Cameron buried himself in his newspaper to hide an uncontrollable desire to laugh.

But, after all, it was no laughing matter. From the luggage and rugs and paraphernalia spread around her, it was obvious this was no flying visit to London. He

(Cameron) was chasing her away.

In order to open communications with the enemy, he offered her a paper. She declined it.

"Look here, Mrs. Allison," he said conciliatingly, "I do wish you'd believe that

I'm awfully sorry my presence seems to have made trouble between you and Hilary-so sorry that I am taking myself out of the way."

"When it's too late," said the girl in a

hard tone.

"But, good Heavens, why is it too late? What have I done, after all, except jeer at Hilary's absurd belief in you? And it was absurd, you must admit. Own up, now-

weren't you deceiving them all?"
"Deceiving them?" said Helen Allison "Why shouldn't I deceive them, if you like to call it deceiving? I've told them I'm a War widow. So I am. My husband was killed at the Front—the only decent thing he ever did in his miserable life. Was it my fault that I was married to a brute who made a public exhibition of me on every possible occasion? Of course people always blame the woman, but I didn't think you were like that. I have always thought of you as kind and---"

"But, I say," said Cameron, appalled, " I know nothing about your private affairs, and of course it's none of my business or anybody else's. We-we seem to be talking

at cross purposes---"

But the girl interrupted.

"Of course you didn't know anything about me. That's what makes it so unfair. When I recognised you that night at the Osbornes', I was glad, because I'd always been grateful to you; but you brought it all back so, I was nervous at first, and had to keep out of your way until I could get hold of myself again. And then, when Hilary

almost cut me yesterday, I knew I'd been mistaken in you, after all, and you'd told

"Told her what?" exclaimed Cameron. "Really, Mrs. Allison, this is too absurd. There's a mistake somewhere. I haven't the faintest idea what you're talking about."

"I'm talking about that night in Durban,"

said the girl.

"Durban?" echoed Cameron stupidly. "Oh, then it was thought-reading, after

"Thought-reading?" Mrs. Allison stared at him in amazement. "What has thoughtreading to do with it? I mean the night that you—that I——"

She covered her face with her hands, and

quite suddenly Cameron saw it all.

"Good Heavens! Durban! Do you mean to tell me that was you?" he said. "Why, you poor little soul, I hadn't the faintest idea!"

"Dear Dick," wrote Hilary a week later, "that little cat of a Helen Allison has gone away from Dipplecourt indefinitely, so do get your horrid business done and hurry back to us as quickly as you can. Everybody has been asking for you, and you seem to have made a good impression all round, in spite of Helen's opinion, which evidently doesn't matter, after all."

To which Mr. Cameron replied

telegram-

"Helen's opinion more important than you think. She married me this morning."

UP AND DOWN.

OOLISH people in the town Do not see the Summer die; Do not heed the Autumn brown 'Neath golden evening's wistful eye; Up the street and down the street Come and go their restless feet.

Heather rusts beneath the sun, Scarlet glows the oaken spray, Diamond-clear the freshets run 'Neath November's dying day; Silver birches, ghostly, gleam Pale above the paling stream.

Foolish people in the town, What to you the season's pride, Myriad leaves all tumbling down-Grey and gold on every side? Up the street and down the street, Stay-oh, stay your restless feet! R. B. INCE.



MUSTELA OF THE LONE HAND

By CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

Author of "Kings in Exile," "Neighbours Unknown," "The Secret Trails," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

I'was in the very heart of the ancient wood, the forest primeval of the North, gloomy with the dark green, crowded ranks of fir and spruce and hemlock, and tangled with the huge windfalls of countless storm-torn winters. But now, at high noon of the glowing Northern summer, the gloom was pierced to its depths with shafts of radiant sun; the barred and chequered transparent brown shadows hummed with dancing flies; the warm air was alive with the small, thin notes of chickadee and nuthatch, varied now and then by the impertinent scolding of the Canada jay; and the drowsing tree-tops

steamed up an incense of balsamy fragrance in the heat. The ancient wilderness dreamed, stretched itself all open to the sun, and seemed to sigh with immeasurable content.

High up in the grey trunk of a half-dead forest giant was a round hole, the entrance to what had been the nest of a pair of big, red-headed, golden-winged woodpeckers, or "yellow-hammers." The big woodpeckers had long since been dispossessed—the female, probably, caught and devoured, with her eggs, upon the nest. The dispossessor, and present tenant, was Mustela.

Framed in the blackness of the round hole was a sharp-muzzled, triangular, golden-

brown face with high, pointed ears, looking out upon the world below with keen eyes in which a savage wildness and an alert curiosity were incongruously mingled. Nothing that went on upon the dim ground far below, among the tangled trunks and windfalls, or in the sun-drenched tree-tops, escaped that restless and piercing gaze. But Mustela had well fed, and felt lazy, and this hour of noon was not his hunting hour; so the most unsuspecting red squirrel, gathering cones in a neighbouring pine, was insufficient to lure him from his rest, and the plumpest hare, waving its long, suspicious ears down among ground shadows, only made him lick his thin lips and think what he would do later on in the afternoon, when he felt like it.

Presently, however, a figure came into view at sight of which Mustela's expression changed. His thin black lips wrinkled back in a soundless snarl, displaying the full length of his long, snow-white, deadly-sharp canines, and a red spark of hate smouldered in his bright eyes. But no less than his hate was his curiosity—a curiosity which is the most dangerous weakness of all Mustela's tribe. Mustela's pointed head stretched itself clear of the hole, in order to get a better look at the man who was passing below his tree.

A man was a rare sight in that remote and inaccessible section of the Northern wilderness. This particular man—a woodsman, a "timber-cruiser," seeking out new and profitable areas for the work of the lumbermen-wore a flaming red-and-orange handkerchief loosely knotted about his brawny neck, and carried over his shoulder an axe whose bright blade flashed sharply whenever a ray of sunlight struck it. was this flashing axe, and the blazing colour of the scarlet-and-orange kerchief, that excited Mustela's curiosity—so excited it, indeed, that he came clean out of the hole and circled the great trunk, clinging close and wide-legged like a squirrel, in order to keep the woodsman in view as he passed by.

Engrossed though he was in the interesting figure of the man, Mustela's vigilance was still unsleeping. His amazingly quick ears at this moment caught a hushed hissing of wings in the air above his head. He did not stop to look up and investigate. Like a streak of ruddy light he flashed around the trunk and whisked back into his hole, and just as he vanished a magnificent long-winged goshawk, the king of all the

falcons, swooping down from the blue, struck savagely with his clutching talons at the edge of the hole.

The quickness of Mustela was miraculous. Moreover, he was not content with escape. He wanted vengeance. Even in his lightning dive into his refuge he had managed to turn about, doubling on himself like an eel. And now, as those terrible talons gripped and clung for half a second to the edge of the hole, he snapped his teeth securely into the last joint of the longest talon and dragged it an inch or two in.

With a yelp of fury and surprise, the great falcon strove to lift himself into the air, pounding madly with his splendid wings and twisting himself about, and thrusting mightily with his free foot against the side of the hole. But he found himself held fast, as in a trap. Sagging back with all his weight, Mustela braced himself securely with all four feet and hung on, his whipcord sinews set like steel. He knew that if he let go for an instant, to secure a better mouthful, his enemy would escape; so he just worried and chewed at the joint, satisfied with the punishment he was inflicting.

Meanwhile the woodsman, his attention drawn by that one sudden yelp of the falcon and by the prolonged and violent buffeting of wings, had turned back to see what was going on. Pausing at the foot of Mustela's tree, he peered upwards with narrowed eyes. A slow smile wrinkled his weather-beaten face. He did not like hawks. For a moment or two he stood wondering what it was in the hole that could hold so powerful a bird. Whatever it was, he stood for it.

Being a dead shot with the revolver, he seldom troubled to carry a rifle in his "cruisings." Drawing his long-barrelled "Smith and Wesson" from his belt, he took careful aim and fired. At the sound of the shot, the thing in the hole was startled and let go; and the great bird, turning once over slowly in the air, dropped to his feet with a feathery thud, its talons still contracting shudderingly. The woodsman glanced up, and there, framed in the dark of the hole, was the little yellow face of Mustela, insatiably curious, snarling down upon him viciously.

"Gee," muttered the woodsman, "I might hev' knowed it was one o' them pesky martens! Nobody else o' that size 'ld hev' the gall to tackle a duck-hawk!"

Now, the fur of Mustela, the pine-marten or American sable, is a fur of price; but



"The great falcon strove to lift himself into the air, pounding madly with his splendid wings and twisting himself about. . . But he found himself held fast, as in a trap."

the .woodsman—subject, like most of his kind, to unexpected attacks of sentiment and imagination—felt that to shoot the defiant little fighter would be like an act of treachery to an ally.

"Ye're a pretty fighter, sonny," said he, with a whimsical grin, "an' ye may keep that yaller pelt o' yourn, for all o' me!"

Then he picked up the dead falcon, tied its claws together, slung it upon his axe, and strode off through the trees. He wanted to keep those splendid wings as a present for his girl in at the Settlements.

Highly satisfied with his victory over the mighty falcon—for which he took the full credit to himself—Mustela now retired to the bottom of his comfortable, moss-lined nest and curled himself up to sleep away the heat of the day. As the heat grew sultrier and drowsier through the still hours of early afternoon, there fell upon the forest a heavy silence, deepened rather than broken by the faint hum of the heat-loving flies. And the spicy scents of pine and spruce and tamarack steamed forth richly upon the moveless air.

When the shadows of the trunks began to lengthen, Mustela woke up, and he woke up hungry. Slipping out of his hole, he ran a little way down the trunk and then leapt, lightly and nimbly as a squirrel, into the branches of a big hemlock which grew close to his own tree. Here, in a crotch from which he commanded a good view beneath the foliage, he halted and stood motionless, peering about him for some sign of a likely quarry.

Poised thus, tense, erect and vigilant, Mustela was a picture of beauty swift and fierce. In colour he was of a rich golden brown, with a patch of brilliant yellow covering throat and chest. His tail was long and bushy, to serve him as a balance in his long, squirrel-like leaps from tree to tree. His pointed ears were large and alert, to catch all the faint, elusive forest sounds. In length, being a specially fine specimen of his kind, he was perhaps a couple of inches over two feet. His body had all the lithe grace of a weasel, with something of the strength of his greatcousin and most dreaded foe, the fisher.

For a time nothing stirred. Then from a distance came, faint but shrill, the *chirr-r-r-r* of a red squirrel. Mustela's discriminating ear located the sound at once. All energy on the instant, he darted towards it, springing from branch to branch with amazing speed and noiselessness

The squirrel, noisy and imprudent after the manner of his tribe, was chattering fussily and bouncing about on his branch, excited over something best known to himself, when a darting, gold-brown shape of doom landed upon the other end of the branch, not half a dozen feet from him. With a screech of warning and terror, he bounded into the air, alighted on the trunk, and raced up it, with Mustela close upon his heels. Swift as he was—and everyone who has seen a red squirrel in a hurry knows how he can move-Mustela was swifter, and in about five seconds the little chatterer's fate would have been sealed. But he knew what he was about. This was his own tree. Had it been otherwise, he would have sprung into another, and directed his desperate flight over the slenderest branches, where his enemy's greater weight would be a hindrance. As it was, he managed to gain his hole—just in time—and all that Mustela got was a little mouthful of fur from the tip of that vanishing red tail.

Very angry and disappointed, and hissing like a cat, Mustela jammed his savage face into the hole. He could see the squirrel crouched, with pounding heart and panic-stricken eyes, a few inches below him, just out of his reach. The hole was too small to admit his head. In a rage he tore at the edges with his powerful claws, but the wood was too hard for him to make any impression on it, and after half a minute of futile scratching, he gave up in disgust and raced off down the tree. A moment later the squirrel poked his head out and shrieked an effectual warning to every creature within

With that loud alarm shrilling in his ears, Mustela knew there would be no successful hunting for him till he could put himself beyond the range of it. He raced on, therefore, abashed by his failure, till the taunting sound faded in the distance. Then his bushy brown brush went up in the air again, and his wonted look of insolent self-confidence returned. As it did not seem to be his lucky day for squirrels, he descended to earth and began quartering the ground for the fresh trail of a rabbit.

In that section of the forest where Mustela now found himself, the dark and scented tangle of spruce and balsam-fir was broken by patches of stony barren, clothed unevenly by thickets of stunted white birch, and silver-leaved quaking aspen, and wild sumach with its massive tufts of acrid, dark-crimson bloom. Here the rabbit trails were

abundant, and Mustela was not long in finding one fresh enough to offer him the prospect of a speedy kill. Swiftly and silently, nose to earth, he set himself to follow its intricate and apparently aimless windings, sure that he would come upon a rabbit at the end of it.

As it chanced, however, he never came to the end of that particular trail or set. his teeth in the throat of that particular rabbit. In gliding past a bushy young fir tree, he happened to glance beneath it, and marked another of his tribe tearing the feathers from a new-slain grouse. stranger was smaller and slighter than himself, a young female—quite possibly, indeed, his mate of a few months earlier in the season. Such considerations were less than nothing to Mustela, whose ferocious spirit knew neither gallantry, chivalry, nor mercy. With what seemed a single flashing leap he was upon her—or almost, for the slim female was no longer there. She had bounded away as lightly and instantaneously as if blown by the wind of his coming. She knew Mustela, and she knew it would be death to stay and do battle for her kill. Spitting with rage and fear, she fled from the spot, terrified lest he should pursue her and find the nest where her six precious kittens were concealed.

But Mustela was too hungry to be interested just then in mere slaughter for its own sake. He was feeling serious and practical. The grouse was a full-grown cock, plump and juicy, and when Mustela had devoured it his appetite was sated. But not so his blood-lust. After a hasty toilet he set out again, looking for something to kill.

Crossing the belt of rocky ground, he emerged upon a flat tract of treeless barren covered with a dense growth of blueberry bushes about a foot in height. The bushes at this season were loaded with ripe fruit of a bright blue colour, and squatting among them was a big black bear, enjoying the banquet at his ease. Gathering the berries together wholesale with his great furry paws, he was cramming them into his mouth greedily, with little grunts and gurgles of delight, and the juicy fragments with which his snout and jaws were smeared gave his formidable face an absurdly childish look. To Mustela—when that insolent little animal flashed before him-he vouchsafed no more than a glance of good-natured contempt. For the rank and stringy flesh of a pine-marten he had no use at any time

of year, least of all in the season when the blueberries were ripe.

Mustela, however, was too discreet to pass within reach of one of those huge but nimble paws, lest the happy bear should grow playful under the stimulus of the blueberry juice. He turned aside to a judicious distance, and there, sitting up on his hindquarters like a rabbit, he proceeded to nibble, rather superciliously, a few of the choicest berries. He was not enthusiastic over vegetable food, but, just as a cat will now and then eat grass, he liked at times a little corrective to his unvarying diet of flesh.

Having soon had enough of the blueberry patch, Mustela left it to the bear and turned back toward the deep of the forest, where he felt most at home. He went stealthily, following up the wind in order that his scent might not give warning of his approach. It was getting near sunset by this time, and floods of pinky gold, washing across the open barrens, poured in along the ancient corridors of the forest, touching the sombre trunks with stains of tenderest rose. In this glowing colour Mustela, with his ruddy fur, moved almost invisible.

And, so moving, he came plump upon a big buck-rabbit squatting half asleep in the centre of a clump of pale green fern.

The rabbit bounded straight into the air, his big, childish eyes popping from his head with horror. Mustela's leap was equally instantaneous, and it was unerring. He struck his victim in mid-air, and his fangs met deep in the rabbit's throat. With a scream the rabbit fell backwards and came down with a muffled thump upon the ferns, with Mustela on top of him. There was a brief, thrashing struggle, and then Mustela, his forepaws upon the breast of his still quivering prey-several times larger and heavier than himself-lifted his bloodstained face and stared about him savagely, as if defying all the other prowlers of the forest to come and try to rob him of his prize.

Having eaten his fill, Mustela dragged the remnants of the carcase under a thick bush, defiled it so as to make it distasteful to other eaters of flesh, and scratched a lot of dead leaves and twigs over it till it was effectually hidden. As game was abundant at this season, and as he always preferred a fresh kill, he was not likely to want any more of that victim, but he hated the thought of any rival getting a profit from his prowess.

Mustela now turned his steps homeward,

travelling more lazily, but with eyes, nose, and ears ever on the alert for fresh quarry. Though his appetite was sated for some hours, he was as eager as ever for the hunt, for the fierce joy of the killing and the taste of the hot blood. But the Unseen Powers of the wilderness, ironic and impartial, decided just then that it was time for Mustela to be hunted in his turn.

If there was one creature above all others who could strike the fear of death into Mustela's merciless soul, it was his great-cousin, the ferocious and implacable fisher. Of twice his weight and thrice his strength, and his full peer in swiftness and cunning, the fisher was Mustela's nightmare, from whom there was no escape unless in the depths of some hole too narrow for the fisher's powerful shoulders to get into. And at this moment there was the fisher's grinning, black-muzzled mask crouched in the path before him, eyeing him with the sneer of certain triumph.

Mustela's heart jumped into his throat as he flashed about and fled for his life—straightaway, alas, from his safe hole in the tree-top—and with the lightning dart of a striking rattler the fisher was after him.

Mustela had a start of perhaps twenty paces, and for a time he held his own. He dared no tricks, lest he should lose ground, for he knew his foe was as swift and as cunning as himself. But he knew himself stronger and more enduring than most of his tribe, and therefore he put his hope, for the most part, in his endurance. Moreover, there was always a chance that he might come upon some hole or crevice too narrow for his pursuer. Indeed, to a tough and indomitable spirit like Mustela's, until his enemy's fangs should finally lock themselves in his throat, there would always seem to be a chance. One never could know which way the freakish Fates of the wilderness would cast their favour. On and on he raced, therefore, tearing up or down the long, sloping trunks of ancient windfalls, twisting like a golden snake through tangled thickets, springing in great airy leaps from trunk to rock, from rock to overhanging branch, in silence; and ever at his heels followed the relentless, grinning shape of his pursuer, gaining a little in the long leaps, but losing a little in the denser thickets, and so just about keeping his distance.

.For all Mustela's endurance, the end of that race, in all probability, would have been for him but one swift, screeching fight, and then the dark. But at this juncture the Fates woke up, peered ironically through the grey and ancient mosses of their hair, and remembered some grudge against the fisher

A moment later Mustela, just launching himself on a desperate leap, beheld in his path a huge hornets' nest suspended from a branch near the ground. Well he knew, and respected, that terrible insect, the great black hornet with the cream-white stripes about its body. But it was too late to turn aside. He crashed against the grey, papery sphere, tearing it from its cables, and flashed on, with half a dozen white-hot stings in his hindquarters prodding him to a fresh burst of speed. Swerving slightly, he dashed through a dense thicket of juniper scrub, hoping not only to scrape his fiery tormentors off, but at the same time to gain a little on his big pursuer.

The fisher was at this stage not more than a dozen paces in the rear. He arrived, to his undoing, just as the outraged hornets poured out in a furiously humming swarm from their overturned nest. It was clear enough to them that the fisher was their assailant. With deadly unanimity they

pounced upon him.

With a startled screech the fisher bounced aside and plunged for shelter. But he was too late. The great hornets were all over him. His ears and nostrils were black with them, his long fur was full of them, and his eyes, shut tight, were already a flaming anguish with the corroding poison of their stings. Frantically he burrowed his face down into the moss and through into the moist earth, and madly he clawed at his ears, crushing scores of his tormentors. But he could not crush out the venom which their long stings had injected. Finding it hopeless to free himself from their swarms, he tore madly through the underbrush, but blindly, crashing into trunks and rocks, heedless of everything but the fiery torture which enveloped him. Gradually the hornets fell away from him as he went, knowing that their vengeance was accomplished. At last, groping his way blindly into a crevice between two rocks, he thrust his head down into the moss, and there, a few days later, his swollen body was found by a foraging lynx. The lynx was hungry, but she only sniffed at the carcase and turned away with a growl of disappointment and suspicion. The carcase was too full of poison even for her not too discriminating palate.

Mustela, meanwhile, having the best and sharpest of reasons for not delaying in his

flight, knew nothing of the fate of his pursuer. He only became aware, after some minutes, that he was no longer pursued. Incredulous at first, he at length came to the conclusion that the fisher had been discouraged by his superior speed and endurance. His heart, though still pounding unduly, swelled with triumph. By way of precaution he made a long detour to come back to his nest, pounced upon and devoured a couple of plump deer-mice on the way, ran up his tree and slipped comfortably into his hole, and curled up to sleep with the feeling of a day well spent. He had fed full, he had robbed his fellows successfully, he had drunk the blood of his victims, he had outwitted or eluded his enemies. As for his friends, he had none—a fact which to Mustela of the Lone Hand was of no concern whatever.

Now, as the summer waned, and the first keen touch of autumn set the wilderness aflame with the scarlet of maple and sumach, the pale gold of poplar and birch, Mustela, for all his abounding health and prosperous hunting, grew restless with a discontent which he could not understand. Of the coming winter he had no dread. He had passed through several winters, faring well when other prowlers less daring and expert had starved, and finding that deep nest of his in the old tree a snug refuge from the fiercest storms. But now—he knew not why —the nest grew irksome to him, and his familiar hunting-grounds distasteful. Even the eager hunt, the triumphant kill itself, had lost their zest. He forgot to kill except when he was hungry. A strange fever was

in his blood, a lust for wandering. And so, one wistful, softly-glowing day of Indian summer, when the violet light that bathed the forest was full of mystery and allurement, he set off on a journey. He had no thought of why he was going, or whither. Nor was he conscious of any haste. When hungry, he stopped to hunt and kill and feed. But he no longer cared to conceal the remnants of his kills, for he dimly realised that he would not be returning. If running waters crossed his path, he swam them. If broad lakes intervened, he skirted them. From time to time he became aware that others of his kind were moving with him, but each one furtive, silent, solitary, selfsufficing, like himself. He heeded them not, nor they him; but all, impelled by one urge which could but be blindly obeyed, kept drifting onward toward the west and At length, when the first snows began, Mustela stopped, in a forest not greatly different from that which he had left, but even wilder, denser, more unvisited by the foot of man. And here, the Wanderlust having suddenly left his blood, he found himself a new hole, lined it warm with moss and dry grasses, and resumed his hunting with all the ancient zest.

Back in Mustela's old hunting grounds a lonely trapper, finding no more golden sable in his snares, but only mink and lynx and fox, grumbled regretfully:

"The marten hev' quit. We'll see no more of 'em round these parts for another

ten vear."

But he had no notion why they had quit, nor had anyone else—not even Mustela himself.

BEWILDERMENT.

KNOW not which is sweeter to the mind—
When the day's dying monarch leans upon
The world's grim edge before he quits mankind,
Or the first moment after he is gone.

Tell me, O bird that singest to my heart
From the kind leaves that temper the noon sun,
Does your proud singing make my tears to start,
Or the strange silence when your song is done?
PERCY HASELDEN.

DOG DAYS

Bv H. F. FRAMPTON

ILLUSTRATED BYP. B. HICKLING

TIHIS afternoon she was wearing a grey costume of a rough material which Cahill considered ideal for country wear. Her progress along the footpath was slower than usual, and he noticed that she occasionally paused to peer into the pathside thicket.

Cahill himself was standing—ostensibly fishing—at that point on the path where the stream, which meandered obscurely on the other side of the thicket, suddenly asserted itself and, plunging through the undergrowth, met the path and forced it to a sharp left turn, thenceforward to bear it company as far as the village in the valley.

"' He either fears his fate too much, or his deserts are small," "he muttered rapidly, "' who dares not put it to the touch . . .' I wonder if that is applicable when you've never exchanged a single word with the 'Fate'? The fact is, I ought to be run in for loitering."

A celestial music suddenly stilled the ragged and burdened orchestra of bird and insect, or so it seemed. He listened, and again the soft voice called his name.

"Robert!" she repeated. "Robert!"

He dropped his rod in surprise and moved slowly to meet her, hat in hand. Hastily he rummaged the pigeon-holes of memory.

"You mustn't tell me who you are," he greeted her; "it'll come in a minute. How it ever went, I can't imagine-a blind spot in the brain, I suppose! I am going to search my boyhood's acquaintance first, because it must have been that far back. And relatives are ruled out at once, because as children they were plain."

As a ripple over calm water a faint expression of surprise came over her face, but the grey eyes gradually narrowed with

amusement.

" My dog is called Robert," she explained, "because I bought him to keep away burglars. He used to enter the thicket after rabbits, but he's been missing since last evening - an English terrier, white except for one black ear."

"Why must the gods always flatter those they must undo?" he commented, continuing swiftly: "But I'm sorry about Robert. An English terrier, you said, with a black ear? If you won't object, I shall devote myself to discovering the thief."

"You think someone must have stolen him?" she was startled into exclaiming.

" He would never have left you willingly." The colour slowly mounted her cheeks.

"Not that dogs aren't sometimes unfaithful," he resumed immediately and reflectively. "About four o'clock one wintry morning a mongrel puppy, a barrel of beer, and a battery of artillery disappeared from a French village. The dog belonged to me, the beer to the estaminet. Can you guess the sequel?"

"The artillery had taken the dog?" she

hazarded.

"I'm not so sure," he told her sadly.

"But I like that theory best."

"Then there is no sequel, really?"

"Only that for some time afterwards the beer sold in that village was watered."

She checked the laugh that came to her

ips.
"I don't think I ought to let you bother about Robert," she said formally. "Of course it is kind of you to offer, and if you should come across him accidentally and would drop a note to Brook Cottage, I should be very grateful. And I could send the housekeeper to you to collect him. You see, if he doesn't turn up this evening, I shall advertise. I can only get out for a short time in the afternoon to look for him myself," she added carelessly, "because I'm staying with an old school-friend who has recently come through a severe

"To advertise is unnecessary," rejoined Cahill firmly. "You will be besieged by the owners of mongrels and agents for dog biscuits, and your friend will have a relapse. Decline to put the case in my hands, and you raise the unemployment figures for the district. You are too kind to do that. Until Robert is found, I will call here each after-

noon at this time to report."

"Well, if you really think you can find him," she yielded. "His tail is a stumpy one, and he answers to his name."

"I shall commence this evening," he

assured her.

Then she turned away. When she had disappeared, Cahill picked up his rod and disentangled his hook from a clump of docks on the farther bank by the simple process of reeling in the line until something

gave.

By twelve noon the following day Cahill had realised that the recovery of Robert involved more than the institution of a few inquiries among small boys in the locality. He returned from a false scent after lunch a little dispirited, and was overtaken on the road by the tenant of "The Eyrie," a large, old-fashioned house whose chimneys were visible above the trees half a mile ahead.

"I thought you were in Town," Cahill

remarked.

Austin Joliffe had been carrying his hat in his hand, and flaunting a premature, frontal baldness which made a piquant contrast to the expression of almost childlike innocence which was the habitual cast of his countenance. He now replaced his hat and fell into step with his companion.

"Angela is. I returned the day before yesterday," he explained. "To be candid—and that is to be myself—I was sent home in advance like a piece of luggage. Angela is coming on later with a friend. You are about to say that a husband is, after all, only a piece of luggage. Refrain. To the garrulous I know that repression is difficult; but still I say, refrain. Always remember that grey hairs—however few they are—should command respect. Remember, too, that you may some day become a husband yourself. Women seem to grow less and less particular."

Cahill mused.

"I wonder," he commented audibly, "whether senile decay will take me like

that?"

"I've just had a chat with Brill," Joliffe continued. "It seems that I have some trees which overshadow his wheat. The trees, I suppose, will have to come down, but the complaint is very illuminating. What inference would you yourself draw from it?"

"The inference I draw is based on the length of time I have known you," replied Cahill. "There is something on your mind, and you will come to the point in due course. In the meantime, by all means enunciate syllables. One must not forget that you have had nobody to talk to for two whole days."

"The inference I draw myself," pursued his companion, "is that the weather has been everything that a farmer could wish."

For a few minutes they trudged on in silence.

"Brill seems to be a very observant man," Joliffe presently recommenced. "I suppose most farmers are. He says the thicket is not a good place to fish by, because people using the path frighten them away. He doesn't think the afternoon is the right time to fish, either, but he didn't say why. Presumably the fish take a nap in the afternoon. I should myself if I were one. However, we can discuss the question over an invigorating cup of tea."

They had reached the iron gates of the

drive in front of "The Eyrie."

"Not this afternoon," returned Cahill.
"Brill at second hand demands something

more invigorating than tea."

A terrier, white except for his left ear, came pelting down the drive, barking furiously. He reached Joliffe and jumped at him in a series of eager springs, stumpy tail wagging violently.

"I think I shall call him Raffles," Joliffe remarked, enduring the affectionate display, because he came to us in the night. He wasn't in evening-dress; he hadn't even a collar on. But can you do better?"

Cahill picked up the terrier in his arms

and scratched the black ear.

"I'll try," he volunteered. "Robert!"
The dog, who had been straining to break
free, turned his head and attempted to lick
his captor's face.

"I happen to know the owner," Cahill supplemented. He tucked the panting terrier under his arm. "I'll get along," he

concluded. "See you anon."

TT

An elderly lady was arranging some yellow roses in a crystal bowl over by one of the French windows as Cahill entered the room. The other window was open, and the faint afternoon breeze was stirring the leaves of a newspaper which had been wafted from a small adjacent table to the floor.

"You have gone and done it this time!" he affirmed, coming forward. "Simson's teeth will gnash for a fortnight at least."

His mother made one or two final adjustments to the roses before turning to him. Her pleasant features bore a faint smile, but the expression as a whole was thoughtful.

"I simply had to pick them," she confessed, "and Simson can easily grow some

more if he wants to."

"But not this year," he pointed out, retrieving the newspaper and straightening it. "If I were you, I shouldn't wait till Wednesday. I should order out the car straightaway, collect the girls, and go off to Town at once. If you like, I will engage

Simson in conversation in the greenhouse until you are gone. That's the best that can be done."

"You remind me," she said, "that we ought to let your cousins know the day we are coming."

" I will write tonight. You have decided on Wèdnesdav?"

"Will that day suit you, dear?"

"I shall follow you later on,' said Cahill awkwardly. "I've a few odd matters I should like to clear up first."

He glanced through the window open-

ing.
'Here's Simson," he announced. " Quick! Hide somewhere!"

"Silly!"

Her glance followed his.

"What is that animal with him?" she asked.

Cahill frowned. Behind the gardener trotted the terrier with the black ear. In a perfunctory way the dog paused here and there to sniff the close-trimmed grass. The pair passed from view.

"He is a terrier," answered Cahill reluctantly, "that Simson is looking after for



"'He came back,' Marjory admitted calmly, 'the day after I lost him.'

me. And I am looking after the terrier for someone else."

"It appears to require a lot of looking

after. Why cannot the owner look after it himself? Have you been looking after it very long?"

a matter of fact, the owner doesn't know I've got him." He dropped into an arm-chair and opened the newspaper.



leaned over and tickled the ear of a kitten which was rubbing itself against the leg of her chair."

Cahill hesitated.

"I have had the terrier about a week," he admitted, continuing deliberately: "As

"I am sure," Mrs. Cahill timidly prompted, "that the facts are not so criminal as they sound?"

He turned over a page of the paper.

"The owner," he said carelessly, "is not a man."

His mother moved quietly across to the opening, changed her mind, and came behind his chair.

"I think I understand all you want me to, dear," she said. "You must tell us all about it when you join your sisters and me in Town. I hope you will clear up that—and all the other odd matters—quite satisfactorily."

That afternoon she was in white. Above the pink of her complexion a soft, white hat fitted closely over her coiled dark hair. Cahill decided, when he saw her approaching the thicket, that the leaves could not have fallen twenty-two times since the wondrous event of her birth, and with her arrival the world shrank to the size of the barley-field which waved on her left as she came down the path.

"There was once a dog named Robert," he light-heartedly greeted her, "who deliberately went and lost himself so that a certain mortal would be afforded a few minutes' felicity daily in the company of a Being on a plane infinitely above his own. Finding, moreover, that the Being invariably curtailed the interviews when the conversation showed signs of departure from the purely abstract, the sagacious quadruped determined to lay low until—""

"The method of conveying failure," she interposed at this point, "grows less ingenious every afternoon. The Being doesn't live on a high plane; she inhabits a cottage in the valley. She wonders what means to achieve felicity will be afforded the mortal with other Beings—after the present Being's departure?"

"Mockery I can endure," he said in sudden alarm, "but not this talk of departure. If you are not careful, the wind will take your words as a cue and blow from the east."

There was a little interval while she traced a pattern on the ground with the stick she carried.

"I leave for Town the day after tomorrow," she informed him.

The interval repeated itself.

"I suppose I ought to tell Brill and the other farmers that it is likely to snow before nightfall," he commented miserably.

"I shall not be able to come here tomorrow afternoon," she went on, "because there are so many things to do. I don't know whether you will care to go on searching for Robert? Perhaps I had better leave an address with you in case he should turn up?"

He brightened perceptibly. From an inside pocket he drew a fountain pen. A further search, and he came upon an old envelope.

"Miss M. Lowndes," she dictated, "seven-

teen, Dettingen Square."

"Myself," he said quite cheerfully, "I usually stay with cousins at twenty-nine—opposite the statue."

Demurely she nodded.

"But not since the Armistice, have you?"

"Now, how do you know that?" he

marvelled.

"And before—only for the night, when you were on leave?" Rather rapidly she concluded: "One couldn't help noticing. The Square is very quiet, and a man in uniform so conspicuous."

"This is simply awful," he said. "You have had an advantage all the time and said nothing. Never mind; it shan't be for long. Do you," he went on casually, "spell

it with a 'y' or 'ie'?"
"Which?"

"The M."

"A clever guess," sne smiled. "It you must know—a 'y.' And now—good-bye."

"An inappropriate valediction," he assured her, "but let it pass."

The lawn in front of "The Eyrie" became visible from a point half-way along the drive, and so Cahill was enabled to get over his surprise before he joined the party taking teathe following day beneath the elms.

"I don't think you have met Miss Lowndes, Robert?" said Angela Joliffe.

"Can't have done," Joliffe remarked.
"You did say your friend at the Cottage did not entertain, did you not?"

Marjory Lowndes nodded.

"But Mr. Cahill and I have met before," she acknowledged.

At the same time it was clear that her surprise at the present meeting was as genuine as Cahill's.

"A little while ago—a week, I think—I lost Robert," she explained, "a terrier

with one black ear——"

"And he found him for you?" prompted Joliffe. "That is indeed balm to a raw memory. I'll tell you why. A week ago I became enamoured of an animal with a black ear and wonderful powers of estimating worth at a glance. The moment he saw

me-but I am sure the inference is clear. And if it isn't, I can show you his paw-marks on the front of a dress-shirt. The following day he was riven from me in the act of renewing his esteem. Guess who the dog-thief was!"

He beamed on his guests. It was on Cahill's face his glance alighted last. Slowly and thoughtfully he raised his cup

and saucer and drank.

"The riddle isn't worth answering," his wife commented. "What was the terrier doing here, Robert?"

She, too, became aware that something

was amiss, and continued hastily:

"I had no idea Marjory had another friend in this part of the world. I remained behind on purpose to call and bring her down to stay—and here she was already!"

Joliffe promptly took his cue from his

"I propose," he told Marjory, "to float a company for the purpose of supplying Sweden with timber. The trees will be selected from the best on the estate by a board of local farmers. A secretarial post is open to you whenever you care to apply. In your own handwriting, of course, and if you must use violet ink, don't do it on pink note-paper, because the colours clash. There is only one qualification—an ability to tell the age of a circular saw by a glance at its teeth. For use in the board-room after lunch you will be required to provide yourself with a pair of carpet slippers-

A man-servant came to his elbow with a message. They heard Joliffe reply:

"Ask Mr. Brill to step this way."

The farmer emerged in due course from an angle of the house, clasping in his huge hands a hard felt hat. He was a thick-set man with a ruddy face which shone above a spotless and indefinably incongruous white collar. He halted at a few paces from the group beneath the elms and bowed jerkily.

"I didn't want to disturb you at tea, ladies and gentlemen," he said with embarrassment. "I wanted a word with Mr. Joliffe, but I can come some other time, if

so be---"

"Not at all," replied Joliffe cordially. "There's no time like the present-provided the matter isn't a private one? Won't you sit down for a minute?"

Brill seated himself on a garden chair and blew his nose. He interrupted the operation to refuse Mrs. Joliffe's offer of a cup of tea on the grounds that he seldom

drank it. He was, however, profuse in his thanks.

"I wouldn't have took the liberty," he resumed, "if it hadn't been that the servants all said he'd been hereabouts. My boy was called away to his home early this week, and I thought he must ha' took Spot with You can generally find the two together on the farm when you want. But the lad's back now-come back last evening—and he don't appear to know nothing o' what's become o' Spot."

"Spot?" echoed Joliffe.

"That's what the lad calls the terrier," the farmer explained. "I kept two of 'em out of the whole litter on account of 'em being pretty well what I call pure. They both on 'em had a mark—a black ear One I sold to the lady "—he indicated Marjory-" t'other I kept for rabbiting."

Joliffe cleared his throat and, after a

diffident glance in Cahill's direction:

"The servants are quite right," he said, "when they tell you they have seen such a dog here as you describe, but that dog, I understand, belonged to—that dog was Spot's brother."

Brill turned slowly towards Marjory.

"I hardly think it can have been," she told Joliffe, "or Mr. Cahill would have sent him to me before, wouldn't he?"

A little bewildered, Joliffe, after a puzzled glance at Cahill, followed the farmer's recent example and retired behind a silk

handkerchief.

"Not if there were special reasons for retaining him," Cahill answered. "The fact is, Robert is quite safe and "-addressing Marjory-" you will find him at Number Seventeen when you return to Town. Though what," he told the company at large, "has become of Spot is another matter."

"But," Marjory interposed, before the farmer could get in his next word, "Robert

is found. He is at the Cottage now."

Cahill started.

"When did you find him, dear?" Mrs. Joliffe inquired.

"He came back," Marjory admitted calmly, "the day after I lost him."

She then leaned over and tickled the ear of a kitten which was rubbing itself against

the leg of her chair.

"I didn't know the lady had lost hers, too," began Brill, "but if it's a question of which is which, it's easy enough to tell the dogs apart. It's the right ear of one

that's black and the left ear of t'other. Spot's black on the left ear."

Cahill made the best of a bad job.

" If you can do without Spot for a day or two," he said to Brill, "you shall have him as soon as I can get him back."

Brill was puzzled and showed it.

"Get him back?"

"My mother and sisters," Cahill enlightened them, "decided rather hurriedly to go to Town. They went this morning, and—owing to a misunderstanding—the dog went with them."

Little sleepy twitterings in hedge and tree enhanced the evening's calm. Occasionally a bat swooped blindly overhead. So quiet was their progress towards Brook Cottage that twenty yards ahead of them a young rabbit leapt into the air with

surprise before bounding across the lane and into the ditch.

A lighted window revealed the proximity of the Cottage. At the gate Marjory hesitated. Cahill knew somehow that she was smiling.

"When your mother calls with the terrier,"

she inquired, "what am I to say?"

"You will not be allowed to say anything," Cahill replied. "I will explain everything to her later. Your part is to send Spot back to Brill. And don't you ever deceive me again, my dear!"

"What about you?" she demanded

oldly.

"That is different," he said. "You ask Robert."

From somewhere at the back of the Cottage sounded a short bark and the rattle of a chain.

DIMITY GOWN.

N Derry-down-Dale there lives a lass,
The prettiest ever that walked in grass:
Her eyes they are blue and her hair is brown,
And she always goes in a dimity gown.
Oh, silk and satin are fine to see,
And Greek and Latin are wise and high,
But Dimity Gown is the girl for me—
That's what I says, says I!

In Derry-down-Dale, at the set of sun, I take my way when my work is done; There isn't a lady in court or town Can match my maid in a dimity gown. Oh, frill and feather are fine to see, And lasting leather is good to buy, But Dimity Gown is the girl for me—

That's what I says, says 1!

In Derry-down-Dale, come Martinmas,
I'll make a bride of my dainty lass;
I wouldn't exchange with the king in his crown,
When' I am wedded to Dimity Gown!
Oh, rings and fairings are fine to see,
And rich folks' wearings in lavender lie,
But Dimity Gown is the girl for me—
That's what I says, says I!

MAY BYRON.

THE DUMB DANCER

MURRAY FISHER

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WALLIS MILLS

HILIPPA, buttoning her leather motoring coat high around her neck, began to draw on fur-covered gauntlets that resembled nothing so much as a

couple of deceased Persian kittens.

"Well," she said, looking down on Marcia, who was smoking a cigarette disdainfully amid a quantity of fluffy cushions, "I'm sorry you are not coming, old thing. The dances are sure to be 'it' all right, this year. Even the Ladies' Club has woke up to the value of a private subscription dance, as a hopeful means of getting rid of a few daughters. Still, if you can't get a man to pair with-well, you can't. It is a difficult job nowadays, I know. Thank goodness, I have got the brothers. They save me so much fag when I want to go to a dance or take the 'Singer' to pieces. Good-bye, old sport!"

Marcia's face flushed for a moment with annoyance. Then she got up slowly and accompanied her friend to the front door. In a few minutes Philippa's car was crunching its satisfied way down the gravel drive. Marcia closed the door and sighed.

She was feeling what Philippa would have termed "fed up." Marcia had always been accustomed to have an exceedingly pleasant time, for, until a year or so ago, there had been always plenty of men about to provide it for her. But now the military camps and aerodromes around had disappeared. there seemed no likelihood of another war coming along to supply a sufficiency of fox-trotting subalterns, poor Marcia When she thought was neglected. her new black evening-dress, or that slight pink confection that was so difficult to find, when once it had concealed itself in the corner of a drawer, she nearly wept with annoyance. And there was Philippa, who would have attended a dance in riding breeches, blessed by an inscrutable Providence with such an ample supply of brothers that she could have gone to a ball every day of the week had she felt so disposed. Certainly everything seemed

to be very depressing. Marcia shook her short curls defiantly at Fate, and made her

way to the kitchen.

Marcia's mother had just decided that tea at four in the afternoon was bad for her health, and, after an hour's careful reflection, had selected beef-tea to take its place. Accordingly it had fallen on Marcia to break the news to the housemaid.

Mrs. Thornton had somehow or other gained the impression that she possessed a commanding and decisive personality, and she was accustomed to consider that it was only by the wielding of her remarkable willpower that she had been able to beat off the attacks of the many and diverse diseases by which she was so constantly imagining herself to be threatened. In order that she might live up to the possession of this remarkable personality, and impress it on the household with due significance, she found it necessary constantly to be making unusual and troublesome decisions. When her mother had decided to take beef-tea instead of tea in the afternoon, Marcia was only thankful that she had not insisted on suet pudding or champagne.

As Marcia neared the servants' quarters, she could hear the muffled sounds of a gramophone. She opened the kitchen door, and was confronted by the sight of the housemaid in the arms of a laughing khakiclad young man, executing a really very creditable fox-trot. For a moment Marcia stood watching them. Then the dancing soldier caught sight of her, and he stopped laughing and dancing at the same time. For a moment his eyes, with the laughter still in them, gazed with astonished admiration at the girl in the doorway, then he stood aside awkwardly while Frances received the

instruction about the beef-tea.

There was something about the housemaid's visitor that made it quite impossible for Marcia to do any scolding. He was so entirely pleasing to look at, that quite unconsciously she found herself envying Frances her fox-trot. Then he spoke.

"Sorry, miss," he began slowly, and his voice was encased tightly in the Cockneyest of Cockney accents. "Frances and me are cousins, and we haven't set eyes on each other for five years, owing to this laite war; accordingly, perhaps, we 'ave got a bit excited.

Marcia winced inwardly. It seemed incredible that anyone should have been

inflicted with so terrible an accent.

"It is quite all right," she said. "I hope you will enjoy your dance. Don't forget the beef-tea, Frances." Then she made her way back to the drawing-room.

Behind her an agitated young man was gazing in open-eyed admiration at the door

through which she had vanished.

"My dear Frances," he cried, "what a girl! What a face! What a smile!"

But Frances was winding up the gramo-

phone.

"What a one you are for joking!" she said. "Cousins indeed! Miss Thornton is a bit worried to-day because she can't get a young man to take her to some dances. We all have our troubles, I expects. Let's have another step. I needn't get the beeftea for half an hour yet."

But as they dodged neatly among the dressers, it was of the girl upstairs, who couldn't get a partner to take her to the

dances, that the man was thinking.

"Now, did you see James about the beef-tea?" asked Mrs. Thornton, a few minutes later. She usually spoke of her housemaid as "James," because it amused her to explain to anyone present that her father used to keep butlers, and that the habit of calling the servants "James" had clung to her.

Marcia nodded assent, and, taking a cigarette from a box on the mantelpiece, lit

it carefully.

"I do hope, my dear," her mother went on, "that you have settled on some nice man to go with you to the dances. I really don't know what girls are coming to nowadays. I'm sure, when I was a girl of your age, I simply swarmed with admirers. But then, of course, I had character, besides looks. But, as Mrs. Watson was saying to me this morning in the town, what was good enough for men-folk during the War won't do now. And that, I suppose, applies to girls as much as it does to butter."

Marcia had long ago given up all desire to lose her temper when her mother aggravated her; but she, too, had been in the town in the morning, and her friends had been a

great deal too sympathetic to her about these dances. She had hated it. Then came Philippa's careless sympathy, followed by the sight of her own housemaid dancing with an ideal partner in the kitchen. Now came her mother's aggravating chatter. Marcia blew out a little cloud of cigarette smoke, and in sheer desperation made a very rash statement—

"My dear mater," she lied, "it is all right about my partner. There is a man I met in London coming up to go to them

with me."

Mrs. Thornton switched her line of fire to

another angle.

"Now, I do hope," she said, "that that doesn't mean entertaining him for a week down here, because my nerves simply won't stand it."

"No," said Marcia. "He'll be staying

with friends."

Mrs. Thornton sighed with relief. had no use whatever for anyone who would be sure to prefer talking to her daughter rather than to herself.

"That's a good thing," she said. "Now, what is his name, and what are his means?"

Marcia glanced at the clock, and rang the bell by the fireside to hasten tea and interruption.

"I don't know really-" she began,

with considerable truth.

Mrs. Thornton sighed angrily. "My good girl—" she began.

"I mean," corrected Marcia hastily, "that his name is—er—Robinson, and his means sort of ordinary."

"If his means are satisfactory," stated her mother, "you may ask him to dinner. If he is one of those people who don't provide their own dancing tickets, he can meet you one morning in Town and give you coffee and buns in Oxford Street! Ah, here is James with the beef-tea! I think, after all, Marcia dear, that I will take a little of your tea. Beef-tea always tastes so much like beef."

That evening Marcia retired to her room early, because she wanted to think. As was usual when she retired early, Frances appeared to brush her hair.

"I'm very sorry, miss," began the house-

maid, "about this afternoon, but---" "He dances very nicely," said Marcia thoughtfully, "very nicely indeed. What is his name?"

This question seemed to confuse Frances for a moment. The hair-brushes dabbed

Marcia's head a little frantically.

"Robinson," the maid answered, with a little gasp—"Corporal Robinson!"

It was Marcia's turn for agitation.

"That is a very odd thing," she said thoughtfully—" a very curious coincidence. Why, that is the name of the man that I told my mother was taking me to the dances! "

By the action of the hair-brushes it was clear that Frances was still agitated, but Marcia was too concerned with her own thoughts to notice it.

Frances ventured on an explanation.

"Perhaps," she suggested, "there is another gentleman of the same name.'

But Marcia's thoughts were busy on a very daring plan that had just occurred to After all, it is not everyone who, inventing a person in the afternoon, finds him, by the agency of the housemaid, in the evening.
"Frances," she said, "is Mr. Robinson

your young man?"

Frances was quite decided about this. "I thought that you knew, miss," she said, a trifle haughtily, "that I am at present walking out with Mr. Pott, the milkman. Mr. Robinson's friendship for me is quite laconic."

Marcia puckered her brows for a minute, until she had quite got the meaning of this last sentence, then she continued—

" Where does he live?"

"In London," replied Frances, obviously

without any strain on her invention.

"So does my Mr. Robinson," said Marcia. "That really is quite satisfactory. Now, tell me, Frances, did he say anything about me, after I had disturbed you in the kitchen?"

Again there was clearly no need for the

aid of imagination.

"Oh, he did," replied the housemaid. "Said you were the most wonderful and——" Marcia held up her hand and stopped any further repetition of the Corporal's sayings. From the expression on his face, when she had left the kitchen, she had guessed that he must have been thinking something very like this.

"The only trouble is;" she continued thoughtfully, "his terrible accent."

Frances was by this time becoming slightly bewildered. Marcia caught a glimpse of her face in the mirror on the dressing-table, and considered it time to explain.

"The fact is, Frances," she said, "that I want to borrow your cousin to take me

to the dances next week."

"Well, I never!" said Frances, dropping a hair-brush on to the floor. "Well, I never!"

"Only, you see," went on Marcia, "he

has got this terrible accent."

"Well," Frances repeated, again picking

up the hair-brush, "I never did!"

"The fact is," went on the girl, "I liked your cousin's appearance, and I have told an awful whopper to my mother about having arranged with a friend to take me to the two dances, and I shall probably get into no end of a row if nobody helps me out. Now, do you think that he will help me? Only, you see, because of the accent, he would have to be quite dumb! He could easily say that he had lost his voice while he was capturing Jerusalem or something. I mean, I could say it. Now, do you think he would?"

Frances was combing a few of her mistress's fair hairs out of the hair-brushes, and there was a smile on her face.

"Oh, I think so, miss," she said. "He's a very obliging young man—very. I'll ask him.'

"Don't forget about his being dumb," reminded Marcia. "It's very important."

"Very good, miss," said Frances. "I'll tell him about having to get dumb because of the accent. Is that all you want tonight, Miss Marcia?"

'That's all," said Marcia. "Good night."

II.

In a cosy sitting-room in a small house in Chelsea, a brand-new baronet, Corporal Sir Richard Barriton, sat at breakfast with his nurse.

"My dear old thing," he said, as he tackled his third fried egg, "you have been a godsend, a kind Samaritan, and everything that is pleasant. To think that if that remote uncle of mine had not kicked the bucket without leaving any little pitchers about, I should have been still saluting generals in Mesopotamia!"

"Have another egg, Mr. Richard?" suggested the old nurse, who never bothered to take in anything more than the general trend of his conversation. "Or perhaps you would like to start away with the marma-

lade?"

Mrs. Brown had superintended Richard since his parents were removed from this earth—presumably to heaven—when he was but three years old, for his uncle and guardian, beyond paying the expenses of his education, had refused to be bothered with him.

Then in time had come the War, and Richard, turning down Oxford for the recruiting office, spent the next six years of his life doing energetic feats in the unenergetic atmosphere of Mesopotamia. News me what you have been doing of. Did you see my Frances?"

Richard lit a cigarette and nodded his head. "Of course," he said. "And she is just the same as ever, except that she's got the milkman nowadays. And that's a responsibility, of course. We were so pleased to see



"A tall lady, with lorgnettes, accompanied by a young man

of his uncle's death had brought him back to England, and, having no real friends to go to, it was with relief that he found himself welcome as ever at the little house in Chelsea.

"Now," said Mrs. Brown, when the last cup of coffee had been disposed of, "tell each other that we turned on some old gramophone, and had a bit of a dance to work off steam a little. Oh, and Miss Whatsername, the daughter of the old girl that Frances housemaids for, came and caught us at it! So I pretended that I was Frances' cousin, and I fixed up a first-

rate Cockney accent. You couldn't have cut it with a razor, I assure you. And Miss Whatsername had hair like a halo of gold, and her eyes were——"

But Mrs. Brown had heard the postman's knock at the door, and was on her way to the

letter-box.



with the face of a white rabbit."

"Ah," she said, when she returned, "my Frances writes regular. Here's one for you, too, Mr. Richard, inside mine."

"Well," said Richard, a moment or so later, as he scratched his head thoughtfully, "if that doesn't beat everything! Will I take her to a dance? Will I? Will I take

the most wonderful girl in the world to a dance? Will a fish swim? Will a canary chortle? My name is to be Robinson, and I am to be quite dumb! She doesn't like my Cockney accent! Anna," he asked thoughtfully, "do you think that I can succeed in being quite dumb for an evening or so?"

But Mrs. Brown was deep in the contents of her letter.

Richard considered. Consideration appeared to be amusing, for he smiled as he tapped his letter thoughtfully against the breakfast cup before Then he him. wrote a short note to Frances, intimating that he would have much pleasure in becoming dumb for a few days, in order that he might accompany the girl with the golden hair, etc., to her dances.

III.

As the day approached for her experiment in dancing partners, Marcia admitted to herself that she was nervous. This corporal man of Frances's might be all right, but at the same time he might not. She was quite sure that he could dance, and dance

well, because she had watched him with the housemaid in the kitchen. But it was certainly possible that he might do something awkward or gauche, which would cause people to notice them. She had arranged about the countering of his terrible accent by, so to speak, striking him dumb. Would he be a satisfactory dancing partner even with this affliction? Many times Marcia wrinkled her brows, and was on the point of telling Frances to write and put the whole thing off. But there was something about this man that interested her. Yes, even if she took into consideration his appalling accent, he still was very interesting. No, Marcia decided, she would go through with it.

And so the evening of the dance arrived. She had sent his ticket and arranged to meet him in the vestibule.

Marcia was a little late and more than a little agitated. He was standing quite at ease just beyond the man who was taking the tickets. Marcia heaved a tiny sigh of relief. He looked entirely correct. And she had thoughtfully deprived him of speech. Everything would be all right. She went up to him and smiled. His eyes were laughing, but he was satisfactorily mute. She bade him wait while she took off her cloak, and then together they entered the already filling ballroom. Marcia did not care for dancing with many different partners, and so, having filled her card with but one or two names. besides that of her dumb attendant, she was well content.

"Of course you'll have to dance with someone beside me," she said. "I'll introduce you to Philippa. Don't forget you're dumb!"

Richard grinned obediently.

Philippa was a girl who could, and did, face most things, so a dumb fox-trotter had no terrors for her.

"My good Marcia," she whispered hurriedly, "is it the latest craze to take the dumb to dances, and do I have to talk on my hands or my fingers, or something—or will he do that?"

"Oh, he is quite easy to talk to," said Marcia. "You've no idea how simple it is to talk to someone who can't answer back."

Half-way through the evening Marcia discovered that she was enjoying herself very much. She found herself talking away to him quite naturally. If there was anything very particular that he wanted to say, he wrote it on his programme. As the half-hours slipped past, the number of things he wanted to say grew greater and greater. It became evident that, should dancing become a popular recreation for the dumb, a considerable enlargement in the size of dance programmes would be necessary. Having used up every piece of paper that he could

lay hands on, to aid his growing desire for self-expression, he became melancholy.

"What I ought to have brought," he wrote on the last clear portion of his left shirt-cuff, "is a slate."

By the time the end of the dance had been reached, taking into consideration the difficulties of carrying on conversation with someone whose ideas were expressed through the medium of a stumpy programme pencil and a shirt-cuff, Marcia and Richard were progressing very well indeed.

As she brushed her hair before getting into bed that night, Marcia could not remember any dance that she had ever enjoyed so much before, and she found herself to be looking forward very definitely to the next one.

In the meantime Richard dreamt day and night of blue eyes, fair hair, and a certain disappearing dimple which showed itself at unexpected moments when least expected.

The greater part of the day Marcia had spent in unnecessary conversation with the cook, whose mode of speech proclaimed to all who heard her the fact that her upbringing had been among the eastern suburbs of London. After some time Marcia began to consider that a Cockney accent wasn't so bad. Of course, there were Cockney accents and Cockney accents. For instance, what she remembered of the Corporal's Cockneyisms, they were not so impossible as those of the cook. It began to seem rather unkind to have afflicted this man with silence while in her presence. Marcia decided that it was her duty to remove this speechlessness and to allow him to enter into conversation with her between dances. When she met him in the ballroom that night, she thought that he appeared more at ease than ever in his surroundings. As they sat out some time later in a be-palmed conservatory, it seemed to her to be common humanity to allow him to speak to her.

"I think," she said rather hesitatingly, "that it would be nice if you would talk to me a little while we sit out. Your handwriting is so difficult to read in this bad light, and you know how short they are of programmes to-night already."

Richard smiled cheerfully as he brought forth a bundle of programmes from the

breast-pocket of his coat.

"That's a furst-rite idea," he enunciated carefully in his best accent. "I 'ad a grite deal to sai to you, miss, so I lide in a good store to write on. I'm sorry if other folk 'ave 'ad to go without."

Marcia closed her eyes with a little gasp.

This accent was simply appalling.

"Oh!" she said. "Then you had better put them back. I saw Philippa chalking up her partners' names on a corner of the bandstand."

Richard glanced in quiringly at the scarlet Chinese lantern that hung above them, in the hope that it possessed a contrivance for throwing more light on the face of the girl who was sitting under it. He wished to have a clearer view of the fascinating eyelashes. Marcia was feeling very contrite.

"You didn't mind me making you dumb and taking you to dance with me?" she asked anxiously. "Because, if you did, I'm very—very sorry."

Richard, in his eagerness, nearly lost his Cockney accent and his head at the same

" Mind! "Mind!" he almost cried. Why, it's the gritest thing that's ever happened to me! When I'm dancing with

you, I feel as if I was in----"

But before he could select a sufficiently delightful place to suit the completion of his sentence, he saw something very wonderful in Marcia's eyes, and could restrain no longer the overwhelming impulse to clasp her in his arms. His efforts at restraint gave way, and he held in his arms the most marvellous girl in the world, raining kisses —as the qualified novelists usually express it—on her upturned face.

As this situation seemed quite satisfactory to both of them, it would have continued probably for some further time, had not a stifled choke of surprise and horror recalled to them the existence of less interesting persons than themselves.

A tall lady, with lorgnettes, accompanied by a young man with the face of a white rabbit that, having soaked its ears in brilliantine, had brushed them well back,

stood in the doorway.

Marcia's face was flushed, partly from anger and partly from other reasons. However, she knew exactly what to say now.

"Lady Barr-Tootler," she said coldly,

"let me present to you my fiancé."

The lorgnettes focussed themselves on the equally suddenly disengaged and engaged

"Richard!" cried the lady. "Can this be you ? I thought you were in Palestine!"

Richard started. He had not expected to meet any of his relations.

"My dear aunt," he said pettishly, "so 'I am. Garden of Eden, you know. That's Palestine all right, isn't it?"

No newly-engaged man cares about being disturbed by elderly relations in black

sequins and lorgnettes.

Reassured somewhat, Lady Barr-Tootler, from force of habit, immediately began to

look around her for her daughter.

"Then you must positively dance with my girl, Richard," she said. "A delightful dancer. What do you say, Captain List? Yes, this is my nephew, Sir Richard Barriton. What? Yes, do go away and find dear Miriam for me. In the refreshmentroom, I believe. Near the ham sandwiches. Now, my dear Richard——"

But Richard and Marcia had vanished

through another doorway.

"I think," said Marcia appealingly, as they reached the ballroom, "that you had better remain undumb, and explain things to me. I don't understand at all, so far."

"All right," agreed Richard. "What about finding another conservatory?"

"Perhaps," said Marcia, a few minutes later, when she had heard all that there was to explain, "I had better unsay what I told them about us being-er-"

" If you do," Richard hissed into her ear, "if you do, I'll-well, I'll go and eat ham

sandwiches with Miriam!"



ROSE-EMMA

ASHLEY MILNER

ILLUSTRATED JOHN CAMPBELL BY

ENNISON, having at last plunged into his proposal of marriage, was interrupted by the start and the involuntary shake of the head which Celia

"I've been chasing a myth, have I?" he muttered in a changed voice, which had dropped suddenly from his rehearsed eloquence into the normal. "I've been following a star which has gone out? . . But, Celia, I—I believed you loved me!"

"I believed it, too," said the girl half aloud, as a flush of colour flowed into her cheeks, and she looked away from him into

Dennison watched her, biting his lower lip and trying to clear his wits of the baffled longings which still clogged them.

If that means anything, it means that you've already fallen both in and out of love with me!" he challenged, and waited.

The tiny clock above the fireplace ticked with startling distinctness into the silence that followed. The firelight flickered redly upon the girl's downcast face; it glinted in red sparks of reflection from Dennison's rigid eyes. Only the soft his of his hands, as he moved them one upon the other, made any sound between them.

"Yes, that's true," Celia breathed, speaking as if to the fire. "If you had asked me this yesterday, Mr. Dennison, I would have promised to marry you. But to-day something happened. I heard something about you that—that——"

He breathed more freely, sitting back in his chair and folding his arms. "Come, then, he said, in a smiling confidence, "tell me what it was you heard, and give the accused a chance to plead 'Guilty' or 'Not Guilty.' Who accuses me? And of what?"

Celia lifted her head. He caught his breath as he realised again just how much this young, lovely, delicate little face meant to him. Something of his confidence vanished again; the stake he played for was high enough to set every nerve tingling.

"Do you remember that girl named Dwaine?" asked Celia suddenly.

He thrust out his lips. "I remember her," he said shortly. "She worked in my office eighteen months ago. Some money was missing, and I thought I'd good reason to believe Hetty Dwaine was the thief. She was sent to gaol and had almost completed her punishment before I discovered that my own hastiness was to blame. I'll admit I had been criminally careless. '

"And criminally ready to suspect someone of being a thief when really the money had never been stolen," Celia dared to add.

"I've done my best to put that right since," said Dennison. "I made the girl a handsome present when she was released, and I offered to take her back in the office.'

"She didn't come back," Celia whispered, looking back at the fire. "She had picked up a few points during her stay in gaol, and yesterday she went back into prison for a theft that she really did commit. I saw it in the newspaper, and I went to-day to see her mother. I felt interested in the girl because I—I was interested in you, Mr. Dennison. There I heard just what I was afraid of learning. Hetty was honest when you branded her as a thief. Now she's a real thief-incorrigible."

"So you can't forgive me for that now?"

said Dennison quickly.

"No! I can't feel I love a man who, in mere caprice, turned an honest girl into a thief. She's a convict now, and will, perhaps, remain nothing better to the end of her days."

Celia rose, shuddering a little, as if the fire into which she had been staring was framing a picture which became too real.

"You're serious?" exclaimed Dennison, amazed that he was to be dismissed without further parley. "I'm convicted and condemned? You'll break our—our friendship because of this wretched mistake of mine?

Celia, hesitating near the door, met his eyes. "I can't tell you more than I have done," she said. "Whenever I used to

think of you, it was to admire you. Now I can't think of you without calling to mind the picture of a girl convict who would have been an honest girl still if you'd treated her fairly. So I——"

"You mean that I've to wipe all that out before we can be what we were?" he challenged. "I'm to make good, some-

how?"

"I hadn't thought of it so," returned the girl, with a new light coming into her eyes. "How could a man make good for a thing like that?... But if you did—if you could..."

Upon those broken sentences he fastened what hope remained to him. A moment of awkward farewell followed, charged with a meaning that was the more embarrassing because it could not be spoken. Then, in the cool of winter evening, Dennison was slowly bringing his wits face to face with his problem.

* * * * *

Dennison was incurably business-like. It was a profitable disease which had lifted him to the head of a prosperous little business whilst still on the edge of thirty years.

Being business-like, he did not see any necessity to make good by breaking into a prison and rescuing the girl named Hetty Dwaine. So far as she was concerned, she had sinned and was being punished; for a long time, at least, it would be impossible to get into any kind of contact with her.

She was out of the question.

Nor did Dennison see the need to make good by doing something heroic which would lift the submerged tenth gloriously into a prosperous respectability. The submerged tenth were numerous, and Hetty Dwaine was only one. To try to lever up a whole society to compensate for the submerging of one individual would be in the nature of over-payment.

"So it simply works out to this," said Dennison at last. "I turned an honest girl into a thief and ruined her. Therefore, to balance the fault, I must turn a thief into an honest girl. Then I'm square with society again. There will remain the same number of thieves and of honest girls as before; I've merely subtracted one and added one

in both groups."

The reasonableness of this solution appealed to Dennison; if he could succeed, it would furnish him with an unanswerable argument for the woman whose love he had so nearly won and so nearly lost.

Unfortunately, the search for a girl thief was not a difficult matter. He discovered Rose-Emma by merely reading through an East End weekly newspaper and selecting a case where a girl of fourteen, caught picking pockets, had been lectured, bound over, and released. Dennison made inquiries and discovered her at home again in two tiny rooms of an East End slum.

"You're Rose Etchell?" asked Dennison, arriving at last at the correct pigsty and looking down at a small, wizened, backward-looking girl, whose scared eyes glinted up at him from beneath a mop of tousled black

hair.

"I'm Rose-Emma," said the child suspiciously. Then, in startling shrillness, she raised her voice: "Father!"

Father came to the door and stood looking at Dennison over the top of Rose-Emma.

"No offence, Mr. Etchell," said Dennison coolly. "I'm merely a—a person who is interested in the reclaiming of children who go wrong. This daughter of yours——"

"Cut that out; you're the second I've 'ad 'ere besides the police court missh'nary," said father. "But come inside. Let's hear

what you've got to say.'

Dennison, following into the room, took an accurate stock of father. All that remained to be decided now was how much

father was likely to make out of it.

"That's what I offer, Mr. Etchell," Dennison said, after ten minutes of bargaining had gone. "Rose-Emma is to come to me as soon as the police court missionary has been satisfied that my housekeeper and myself are respectable and responsible people. Rose-Emma will live at my house and work. You'll get a pound a week from me, and she'll get ten shillings, besides her food. Also I'll undertake to make her honest."

"And she's to come 'ome once a week, of a Saturday night, so as to see to me of a Sunday morning, and not to lose touch with me," bargained father.

"Also to hand over her ten shillings to you," commented Dennison drily, but

nodding assent as he went.

Rose-Emma arrived at Dennison's bachelor establishment in Barnes a few days later, and was promptly handed over to a cynical housekeeper by the name of Barton. Mrs. Barton, having had matters partly explained to her by Dennison, had formed the opinions that Dennison was a fool and that Rose-Emma was a sly little

baggage, before Rose-Emma had taken her hat off.

It was a weird, baffling, distressing day's work for the waif, ended at last with the final restacking of the dinner crockery.

"Now clean yourself up a bit and go in the front room," said Mrs. Barton. "The master wants you."

Barton standing beside her to point out the still unirrigated areas of neck and face and arms and smarting, chapped hands, Rose-Emma dared to slink out into the hall and push open the door of the dining-room. Dennison saw the widening crack and watched the dark, cloudy, terrified eyes peer suddenly across at him.



"'Never?' cried Dennison sharply. 'You never picked a pocket before?' 'No,' said Rose-Emma. 'The only other time I was caught, the lidy let me go.'"

Afterwards began a painful and hands. search for the last traces of wet soap before Mrs. Barton handed over the towel, which until the satisfactory moment she had been guarding behind her back.

Now, with scrubbed and polished face

"Come in, Rose-Emma," said Dennison. "Sit there."

Rose-Emma sat on the last three inches of the big chair and pulled her shiny blue skirt over her knees to hide the darns. Then, rigid, she gripped one knee with either hand and waited. Dennison was not a benevolent sympathiser as yet. He was still a business man who saw nothing pathetic in this scared, backward, crimesoaked child from the underworld.

"I want you to understand that you are an experiment, Rose-Emma," said Dennison.

" You . . ."

"A 'speriment," echoed Rose-Emma, lately from school and desperately anxious

to show she understood.

"Yes, an experiment. You are a thief now. I'm going to make you honest. Did you ever pick pockets before this last affair?"

Rose-Emma wagged her head and said "No" at the same time, giving the word thereby a sort of vibration which made it sound "Noe-woe-woe-woe."

"Never?" cried Dennison sharply.
"You never picked a pocket before?"

"No," said Rose-Emma. "The only other time I was caught, the lidy let

me go."

Dennison, with a little shiver, understood that Rose-Emma's sense of guilt arose from shame of her carelessness in being caught. To be caught by the police was a crime; to be caught by the victim and pardoned was only half a crime. To pick a pocket correctly, cleanly, successfully—where was the crime in that, from Rose-Emma's point of view? How did she sin when her deft, delving fingers erred not?

"You don't understand me," said Dennison, puzzled. "If I left you in this room, and you took the silver out of the sideboard drawer and ran away, what would

you be?"

Rose-Emma's eyes clouded. She was so anxious to please, yet she searched her wits

in vain for an answer to this one.

"Come, answer," said Dennison sternly. "If you ran away with my silver, what would you be?"

"A—a 'speriment," blurted Rose-Emma, in a gush of pride at having remembered.

"Yes, and an unsuccessful experiment," said Dennison. "But listen. I want to be frank with you. Whilst you're here, I'm going to have you treated very kindly. I want you to be happy. And because you respect me and feel grateful to me for all that, I want you to leave my valuables alone. You see? I'm going to teach you that the way to happiness lies in leaving other people's goods alone, and not in stealing them. . . . When you've been here long enough to feel grateful, I shall

perhaps give you a chance of taking something away without being caught. If you resist the temptation because you like me too well to wish to rob me, then I shall have succeeded. Do you understand?"

Rose-Emma, judging by the hardness of his voice that she was being dismissed, came softly to her feet, took two timid steps

toward the door, and then fled.

"The little savage!" muttered Dennison, biting through the end of his cigar. "Yet on that stupid, senseless gutter spawn rests my chance of winning the love of a woman I'm crazy about! Is it myself who is mad, or is it Celia?"

* * * * *

Rose-Emma, progressing under the double influence of Dennison's kindness and his lessons, began to show signs of some sort of understanding.

Like a dog who has learned a new trick, Rose-Emma began to weary her master by her wistful desire to show off her new

accomplishment.

With the cynical Mrs. Barton to watch, Rose-Emma recovered a stump end of Dennison's shaving-stick which had been purloined on behalf of the next washing-day. She brought back the treasure to Dennison and put the greasy fragment into his hand before he understood what she was giving him.

"That is very good of you, my dear," said Dennison, smiling down at his messy hands and at the pathetic stump. "But you still don't understand me. I'm training you to be honest. You seem to think I'm training you into a retriever dog. Just leave things alone, and you'll be honest enough."

This was beyond Rose-Emma's intelligence as yet. She continued to restore his morning newspaper and to bring in his gloves from the hall-stand. Mrs. Barton

chuckled.

"She's playing him up a treat," remarked the housekeeper. "He takes all this in and trusts her. Then, one day, whizz-bang! He'll get up to find the place cleared. . . . I know 'em—these reformed characters from Shoreditch."

Dennison, however, had doubts of his own as to whether Rose-Emma was more sly than stupid. Yet, in his impatience for Celia, he dared to hope. Also he planned for the testing day, when Rose-Emma should have the chance of an easy theft—and should resist it.

He was at home one day, ill, when Rose-Emma came into the room where he sat She had a dog-like knack of finding some means to be near to him; now, for excuse, she set herself to dusting.

"Be careful of those small vases you're handling," warned Dennison suddenly, lazily watching the girl. "They're worth fifty pounds apiece."

Did he see a glint of something like slyness in her eyes as he spoke? Or was it merely fear? If it was fear, then was it fear for the ornaments or fear of a temptation too great for her? Were the deft, pocketpicking fingers tingling again at the handling of so much value?

"A nundred pounds the pair!" breathed Rose-Emma, looking at them and gulping.

"Oh, get out!" snapped Dennison, losing his temper. "It's Saturday, so you can go home now, Rose-Emma. I've a headache.'

The girl banged the ornaments back in their places, left the duster between them, ran into the kitchen for her hat, and was gone. That was her way of showing Dennison how she understood. She was desperately anxious always to show Dennison she was not so weak-witted as other people thought her.

Dennison went to bed that night with a raging headache. He lay sleepless for a long time, then he dozed and woke in turns until five o'clock in the morning. Down below, faintly, he heard the continuation of a noise

which had awakened him.

"Who the deuce is down there?" muttered Dennison. "Not Mrs. Barton at this unearthly hour. Not Rose-Emma, for she's at home. . . . Then a burglar!"

Like most men so far immune, Dennison had imagined burglars to be respectful of his particular house. Now, slipping on a dressing-gown, he went softly down the stairs and into the room immediately below.

"Who's there?" he cried out loudly, and switched on the light at the same

instant.

There was a scream, a patter of feet away from him and the sound of something falling, then a hoarse cry from Dennison himself-

"Rose-Emma!"

Like the half-tamed little animal that she was, the girl was cowering from him in the farthermost corner of the room. Between herself and Dennison lay the vase of Limoges enamel which she had dropped; the other vase was still tightly clenched in her hand.

"Come out, Rose-Emma," said Dennison frostily. "So it's you, is it? I told you that those two vases were worth fifty pounds apiece, and you came back to fetch them. How did you get in?"

"I—I——" Rose-Emma nearly choked,

but moistened her parched and bloodless lips with the tip of her tongue. "You gev me a key, to show you trusted me," she

quavered.

"I was a fool," he snarled, thinking, in a moment of crushing disappointment, how this wretched incident had robbed him of love and Celia. "Put back the two vases, Rose-Emma, and, for Heaven's sake, don't look at me in that terrified way. I'm not going to beat you. I'm simply going to turn you out."

She picked up the fallen vase and replaced them both with shaking hands. All the time her blank eyes never left Dennison's face; as her head moved, so her eyes appeared to travel between their lids in keeping that

fixed stare upon him.

" If it had been anyone else, I would have sent for the police," said Dennison, chafing again at the thought of his disastrouslyended effort to win Celia through this young savage. "But in your case I'd little else to expect. I found you a thief, and a thief you'll be to the end of your days. Kindness like I've shown you has been folly and Your pathetic little pretences of transparent honesty have been clever playacting. This stupid, glassy look in your eyes is play-acting now. . . . Be off, Rose-Emma! Don't come near here again. Give me the key and get away."

She did not move for a moment, but as he took a step toward her, she screamed out suddenly with fright and raced past him to the door. Flinging down the key as she went, she slipped round the sleepy and startled figure of Mrs. Barton as it reached the foot of the stairs; then she was gone with a clatter of boots along the empty

pavements.

"I knew it, sir. I told you so," chanted Mrs. Barton, when Dennison had briefly explained. "But what an 'ussy! What an 'ussy!... But they're all alike, sir, from places like Shoreditch."

Dennison was mildly angry with himself because his confused mind seemed more filled with regrets for Rose-Emma herself than regrets for his own failure to win Celia by the redemption of the child.

He had begun the experiment as a matter

of business pure and simple. If Celia condemned him for turning an honest girl into a thief, then he must make good by turning a thief into an honest girl, just to square his account with Society.

But something else had entered the man during the progress of the experiment. He had allowed himself to wonder what would become of Rose-Emma after she had served his purpose. Also he had been secretly flattered by her stubborn, unthinking devotion to him.

Afraid of the boredom of a suburban Sunday morning, he found himself presently in the Row. There almost at once he met Colin

"I've heard!" said Celia, granting him a quick glance of appreciation as they touched hands in formal greeting.

"Heard what?" asked Dennison, knowing the answer beforehand and wincing.

"I heard how you'd taken a thief-girl from the slums, so as to turn her honest," said Celia rather breathlessly. "At least, I was told the first half, and I guessed the rest. . . . Is she honest now? I—I——"

He interrupted to save the momentary confusion which seized her as she broke off the words. "Be quite at your ease, so far as our compact is concerned, Miss Celia," he said brusquely. "The experiment was a hopeless failure, and my account with Society is still unsettled. She was in my house for six weeks, she played her cards most beautifully, she flung exquisitely fine dust in my eyes, then this morning at five o'clock I discovered her in the house stealing two valuable vases. Caught her in the very act of taking them. . . . Pity, isn't it?"

He did not see the glance which the girl gave him—half pitiful for his failure, half contemptuous of his acceptance of failure. Dennison, with some vague idea of amusing her at his own expense, told her a few anecdotes of Rose-Emma. When he met Celia's eyes again, he saw nothing of amusement in them, but only gravity.

"Let's go and find her, Mr. Dennison," said the girl suddenly. "Our car is just outside the Row by now, waiting for me. Will you come straight to Shoreditch with me now, just to see her? I might be able to speak to her and see if she is utterly bad. When you've done so much, it seems a pity to let her go."

Dennison was too eager to accept the suggestion to trouble himself about its impulsiveness. He was sufficiently in love

with Celia to count even the journey into Shoreditch as a delight beside her; and, somehow, he wanted to see whether that glassy look was gone out of Rose-Emma's eyes. It haunted him.

The big car swept smoothly from West to East. It glided its unfamiliar way among smaller streets. Presently, at the end of a

shabby alley, it stopped.

"This is where Rose-Emma lives," said Dennison grimly. "Will you leave me here

and go back, or will you come?"

Celia decided that she would come. She stepped down from the car and went anxiously along at Dennison's side, linking her arm into his involuntarily.

"That's the place," said Dennison, "next door to where the crowd is. What's

the matter?"

"I'm afraid there's generally something the matter in these streets," said Celia. "But look!"

Dennison watched the movement of the crowd and stopped as they came abreast of it. A knot of women thronged the open doorway, their backs turned to the strangers.

"The chap's near killed 'er!" a woman's voice was saying. "No wonder he run off. He'd best not come back 'ere, if he values

'is skin.''

"The gel was a fool to meddle; she's only 'erself to blame," snapped another woman, glancing round as she answered. Then, seeing the doorway, she straightened herself. "Who's the toffs?" she blurted.

"What's the matter?" came Dennison's big voice, drowning the others. "Someone

hurt here?"

"Only a gel, sir," said the first woman,

and slipped neatly out and away.

Dennison left Celia to follow, if she chose, and breasted his own way through. Then, with a start, he bent forward, staring.

Rose-Emma lay there on a sort of litter, plentifully bandaged, ashen of face, broken, bruised, half senseless.

Just what happened inside Dennison's mind he never understood. It was as if some cord snapped. He crushed forward and was down on his knees beside the bed.

"Rose-Emma! You poor little thing! What's the matter? What's happened to

you, girl?"

The child's eyes opened. The glassy look of fear was gone and the weariness of pain was within them.

"Father belted me," she whispered.

Dennison felt his arms go rigid as he

clenched his big fists. He drew a sharp, convulsive breath between his closed teeth.

"He did, did he?" he said hoarsely at last, and as he spoke he saw that Celia herself was stooping beside him. "What did he belt you for?"

Rose-Emma looked round dazedly. Her slow wits hesitated between caution and

avowal.

"What did your father thrash you for, Rose-Emma?" came Celia's tender voice, broken and faltering before the name was spoken.

"Where's father?" whispered Rose-

Emma.

"He's gone and he's not coming back," snapped Dennison. "He won't be able to hurt you again, even if he does come back. Now, tell me. Look at me, child. Why did he belt you?"

"For—for fetchin' them two vases back,"

breathed the girl.

"For . . . Good Heavens! For doing what?" gasped Dennison, his own face white as the girl's. "For doing what?"

Rose-Emma lowered her head, ashamed. "I told father about them two vases that was worth a nundred pounds," she said stumblingly. "When I come 'ome yesterday afternoon, I told 'im about them, and las' night I woke up and heard 'im coming in 'ome. I pretended to be asleep, but I wasn't. And 'e 'ad the two vases and my key, that 'e'd taken out of my pocket, and . . ."

"Heavens!" Dennison brushed away the drops of sweat which trickled to his cheeks.

The blank look of fear was back in the half-wit's eyes. "I watched where father put them, and I remembered I was to take everything back to you, so's to be honest, because you was kind," said Rose-Emma, in irregular little gusts of words. "And when father was asleep, I took the vases and rode on a cart, and got in and opened the door with the key, and I—I was just

putting the vases back when you came in and caught me. And I daren't tell you that father took 'em, because I 'ad to come back to father. 'E belted me for taking 'em back, but 'e'd 'ave belted me worse than this if I'd told you it was 'im that took 'em."

Dennison stood erect, trying to get his heart and his breath steady again. For an instant the whole world seemed to be reeling groggily about him. Celia was on her knees beside the bed, lifting the bruised arm to her lips.

"She's not seriously hurt?" said Dennison hoarsely at last to a neighbour.

"She could be moved?"

The woman nodded. Dennison stepped forward and lifted the child into his arms.

Rose-Emma, meekly ready to endure whatever new punishment awaited her, kept a terrified silence as she felt herself carried away in Dennison's arms. Then Celia, at their side, said a queerly inappropriate thing.

"Mr. Dennison, we can help that other girl, Hetty Dwaine, when she comes out of gaol?" she asked. "You'll help me to

help her?"

"Yes, of course," he answered, startled that she could have any other thought than Rose-Emma at that moment.

As they reached the car, Rose-Emma looked at it wonderingly. "Where are you takin' me?" she quivered.

"Home," said Dennison very gently.

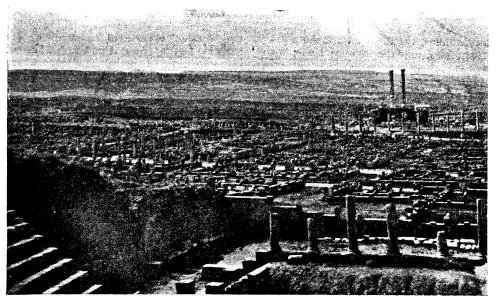
"To your home, for always, Rose-Emma—your home and mine."

"And—mine," added Celia very gravely, yet with a smile touching her lips.

"You mean . . ." cried Dennison.

"I mean that you won," said Celia, blushing and glancing at Rose-Emma, tucked into a nest of rugs in a corner of the car. "Can't you see that you've squared your account? Don't you see how you've won?"





VIEW OF THE CITY FROM THE FORUM.

TIMGAD TRAJAN'S ROMAN CITY IN AFRICA AS IT IS TO-DAY

By J. DEARDEN HOLMES

N the midst of a wild, undulating plain, about half-way between the Mediterranean and the Great Sahara Desert, stand the ruins of a once prosperous Roman city. Built by Trajan in the year A.D. 100, it was one of the watch-dogs of his Mediterranean fleet. Through five and a half centuries it survived, till in A.D. 646 the Arab warrior Sidi Okba swept over the whole of North Africa, and Thamugas, or Thamugadi, as it came to be called, lay a wreck amidst the Aurès Mountains. For more than twelve centuries the mountain torrents, the soil, the sand, and occasional earthquakes did their work, and Thamugadi, desolate and forgotten, slowly sank in the mountain slopes until the top of Trajan's Arch alone remained. Less than half a century ago the French Government, guided by this solitary sign of the derelict, began their

excavations, and to-day, bleached and bare, the almost complete skeleton of the old Roman city rivals, and in some respects even surpasses, the ruins of Pompeii.

If we leave the Mediterranean at a point about 750 miles east of the Straits of Gibraltar, on the North African coast, and travel straight inland for a little over 100 miles, we reach Timgad or Thamugadi. From Algiers, however, it is only some 250 miles, as the crow flies, but about 300 miles by rail.

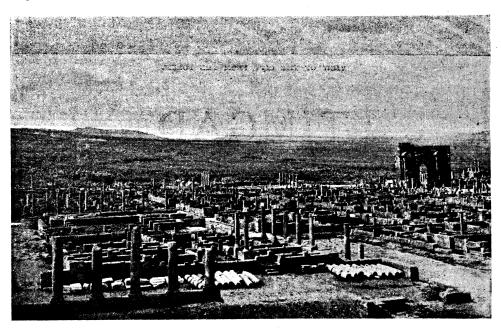
Leaving Algiers at 7.30 in the morning by the fairly comfortable State Railway, with corridor coaches and dining-car, we arrive at El Guerrah Junction between six and seven in the evening. Here the railway branches off for the desert. We decide to push on to Batna, so as to be ready for Timgad on the following morning. After we have had a little refreshment at the

station buffet, the Arab boys make a grab for our bags, and the successful one, with black twinkling eyes and an infectious grin on his face, says "Me, sare"—and you can see it is he.

I am travelling alone, and find myself the sole occupant of a compartment lit from the centre by a single shaded light which makes the dark green cushions look eeric and mysterious. True, there is a small pane of clear glass, through which I can see that the next compartment is occupied, but as the Arab porter pushes in the footwarmer and bangs the door, there is a sense of loneliness. The train rattles along. It is eight o'clock and a dark night. Now we

foot-warmer toward him—but no! He curls his feet on the seat and wraps himself in his burnous. Is it that he wants nothing to do with the dog of a Christian? His face is sad. Does he wish to be alone, or does he, too, feel the companionship of the stars? I wonder!

Batna at last! The 'bus rumbles along to the hotel. My friend has wired from Algiers for a room, and I am ushered into an apartment large enough for half a dozen people. I realise that we are up in the Aurès Mountains. It is cold, but with the help of a hot-water bottle and sleeping between blankets underneath the little French mountain of a counterpane, the



EXCAVATED STREETS, WITH TRAJAN'S ARCH ON THE RIGHT.

stop. In the darkness against the sky are a little bungalow, two or three trees, and a lamp fixed on a post, the only sign of life an Arab porter swinging a lantern. Off once more, heading for the desert—alone. Opening the window, I look out into the night. The deep Eastern sky is studded with myriads of stars; I am no longer alone, but in the company of a glorious host. . . . Another stop. Enter an Arab. The door closes. From under his pale blankety burnous there peeps an embroidered tunic with gilt buttons. His low brown slippers and delicate socks betoken him above the average Arab. I try my pidgin French; no response. I move the

night passes. The morning air is keen and pure.

Batna was originally a camp for the protection of travellers on the way to the Sahara. The present town was built about seventy years ago, and is now in military occupation, with barrack accommodation for 4000 men. It has a civil population of between 5000 and 6000. It has broad streets, and is in most respects a modern little town. It suffers from extreme heat in summer and extreme cold in winter. We are reminded of the latter as some twenty or thirty of us take our seats in the open motor for the twenty-three miles' ride to Timgad. It is early March. As we rush

along, the snow is on the distant hills, and we are glad of our thick overcoats. About seven miles out we pull up at the ruins of Lambessa, built by the Romans in A.D. 125. It was the most important military post in North Africa, being the headquarters of the renowned Third Augustan Legion. Gibbon tells us that there were three legions in Britain, sixteen on the Rhine and Danube, eight for the defence of the Euphrates, Egypt, Africa, and Spain, and that as they became removed from any important scene of war, a single legion maintained domestic tranquillity in

each of these great provinces. Lambessa became, in time, a rich and important city. We can pause only to have a glance at its Prætorium—square, gaunt walls with rounded arches, through which peeps the



TRAJAN'S ARCH

clear blue sky; rows of heavy broken columns against a background of bare hills; beneath our feet the fresh green grass triumphant over the dead past. Further on we pass a convict prison for



THE DECUMANUS MAXIMUS, THE MAIN STREET, PASSING UNDER TRAJAN'S ARCH, WITH RUTS MADE ON THE FLAGGED ROADWAY BY THE TRAFFIC OF 1800 YEARS AGO.

civilians, some of whom are at work in the fields. It is said that many of them were employed on the excavations at Lambessa, and the reverence induced in them by their work was remarkable. As we speed along in the bright morning sunshine, we pass here and there scattered groups of goats tended by Arab shepherd boys, looking much as one thinks David may have looked as he tended his flock in the long ago. Gradually the landscape becomes bare and lonely, till we arrive at Timgad. The only sign of habitation is a small hotel, but at the opposite side of the road there is a strange scene-hundreds of white-robed figures, intermingled with horses, mules,

The excavation of Thamugadi was begun by the French Government a little over forty years ago, and is continuing by means of a small subsidy of £2000 a year. Situated in a slight depression of the Aurès Mountains, 3500 feet above the sea, the city was the centre at which six Roman roads met. It had four gates, one at each point of the compass, and the city was roughly divided into four by the roads running between.

We enter by what was the north gate. On our left is a small building used as a museum, containing vases, coins, lamps, and other relics. But no guide or official meets us. We stumble as if by accident on this Roman skeleton of 1800 years ago. Passing



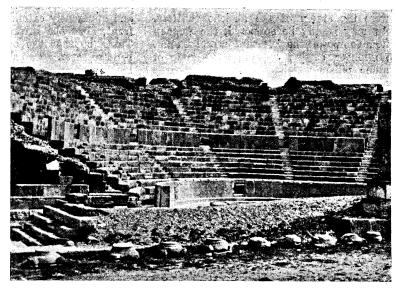
A WEEKLY SCENE OF MODERN ACTIVITY ADJOINING THE ROMAN RUINS: THE MARKET FREQUENTED BY ARABS FROM THE HILLS AND PLAINS AROUND TIMGAD.

goats, and an occasional camel, all enclosed within a huge wooden stockade covering several acres of ground. From the little hotel balcony it is a unique sight. In the road below is a heavy diligence; within the stockade are more than a score of white tents; crowding round them is the peculiar medley of men and animals. It is the weekly Arab market, gathered from the hills and plains of the Aurès, whose bare landscape forms a fitting frame to isolate the vibrant Eastern picture. Centuries ago the Arab devastated these same plains; to-day the ghosts of Thamugadi rise up: he is not allowed in the hotel. "Imshi" is the word, and he is ordered off.

straight down the lonely paved street, known as the Cardo Maximus, we come to the main street, the Decumanus Maximus, which runs at right angles across the city from the eastern and western gates. Facing us are the remains of the Forum, which was approached by a colonnade. Steps led into an inner court surrounded by Corinthian columns. Around this inner court are the Basilica or court of justice, the Curia or senate, where the wise-heads of the Empire discussed their colonial problems, the temple of victory, and the tribune or rostrum, where the politicians and orators held forth.

In Arabella Ward's excellent translation

of M. Gaston Boissier's "L'Afrique Romaine" we have a vivid reconstruction of life on this spot:-" In the first place, it was a meetingplace and promenade for a large part of the inhabitants. Idlers were in the habit of lingering beneath the porticos to seek shelter on rainy days and a little shade during the days of summer, and no doubt they discussed the gossip of small towns. There the open-air meetings called circuli were held,



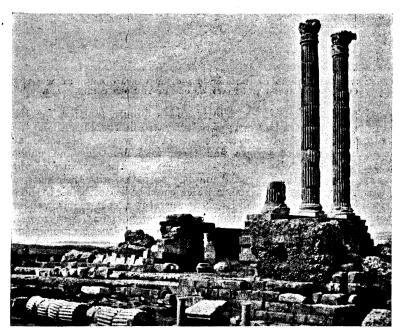
THE AUDITORIUM OF THE THEATRE, WITH STEPS IN LEFT FOREGROUND LEADING TO THE ORCHESTRA AND REMAINS OF PILLARS WHICH SUPPORTED THE STAGE ACROSS THE FOREGROUND.

in which the news was repeated and, when need be, invented, and where even the pleasure was indulged in of occasionally slandering the authorities. The most idle seated themselves on the steps and passed their time in gambling. There has been found, cut in one of the great slabs of the pavement, one of their card tables (tabulæ lusoriæ), which probably answered to our draught-boards. It bears these words, which

give a very clear idea of the sentiments of those who traced them: 'To hunt, to bathe, to gamble, to laugh this is living.'"

. Close to the Forum is the theatre. Originally it had twenty-six tiers of seats (most of which have now been reconstructed) and a gallery, and was capable of holding 3500 or 4000 people. It had no roof, but on certain parts there were movable awnings. To quote M. Boissier again:

"The stage has wholly disappeared. The site can be perceived,



THE GIANT COLUMNS OF THE CAPITOL STANDING LIKE SENTINELS OVER THE DESERTED CITY.

however, which again proves how narrow were the stages of the ancient theatres. As may readily be supposed, the wooden floor composing the pulpitum, or proscenium, no longer exists; but the three rows of stone pillars which supported the boards are still visible. The pulpitum terminated in a small wall which must have been richly ornamented. All around the orchestra —which is the best preserved portion of the building—where the tiers of benches begin, there are three steps, so wide that presumably the benches of the city magistrates were placed thereon. . . . The centre was no doubt reserved for other people of note, or remained empty for certain mime dances. Beyond the three steps was the orchestra, enclosed within a small wall, or podium,

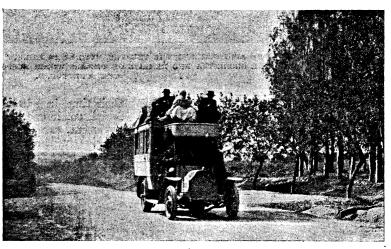
composed of smooth slabs, which are still standing in place."

Let us now stand behind the Forum. which is the highest point in the city. It is an impressive sight, and as we continue to gaze, the weirdness of the scene grips us. There is a strange silence—the silence of the grave. To the right the Arch of Trajan, which has stood through the centuries, is now the gateway to the sepulchre. To the far left the

two mighty columns of the Temple of Jupiter rear their heads as the first-fruits of the resurrection, waiting for Thamugadi to shake itself free from the grave-clothes of the past. It is as though a voice had said: "Thamugadi, come forth!" Reverently treading the broad limestone pavement of the Decumanus Maximus, we pass the end of the Cardo Maximus, where stand the remains of the public library, maybe the gift of some Roman Carnegie, as there are records to show that public-spirited Roman citizens vied with each other in the presentation of buildings and monuments.

Now we are passing rows of pillars between which were the Roman shops. These were usually of the "lock-up" type, but some communicated with the houses. Most shops

had a stone counter facing into the street, and apparently extending across the whole front, after the manner of the bazaars in Tunis, so that the owner would have to bend to enter. Two shops have been found built into the Forum facing into the theatre street—possibly some Roman refreshment house. The largest private house so far discovered also had shops built into it. indicating that, although the Romans were not a nation of shopkeepers, they were a practical people. This is evidenced, too. by their drainage system, with its main sewer running along the Cardo Maximus, its street-corner gutters, and the remains of its admirable lavatory arrangements. the south side of the Decumanus Maximus is a granary with several grindstones; also



A NATIVE ARAB RIDING ON A MOTOR-'BUS OVER A ROAD MADE BY WESTERN CIVILISATION ALONG THE TRACK OF ONE OF THE OLD ROMAN ROADS.

a pottery and a bronze foundry, for the arts were cultivated in Thamugadi, and the æsthetic side of life was not neglected, as we find there were fountains and public There are also remains of the gardens. usual fine Roman baths, with their suite of rooms which could be heated by air to three different temperatures, cold rooms, vapour bath rooms, massage rooms, rest rooms, rooms for exercise, and places for promenade with mosaic floors and statuary. Underneath were great furnaces which heated the air and water, the latter in large round boilers; on the walls of the cellars cinders have been found.

As we approach Trajan's Arch near the western gate, we get a fine stretch of road. The pavement is laid crosswise to prevent the chariot wheels running in the crevices,

and the very ruts worn in the solid stone by those same chariot wheels about 1800

years ago may still be seen.

How dearly humanity loves a monument! Trajan the soldier, with his thirst for conquest, is remembered by this relic of his great empire—a monument at once of might and frailty. He and his colony are no more, but the arch remains, and a magnificently proportioned arch it is, with its Corinthian and their exquisitely carved columns Moderns have surpassed it in capitals. mere bigness, but for grace and beauty it stands a model for the centuries. Built of sandstone, with marble pillars and facings, it has three arches, the centre for wheeled traffic and the two smaller side arches for pedestrians, the three arches being closed by portcullises.

We can almost picture the state opening. It is Trajan's day, and the arch is now complete. From the distant military outpost of Lambessa, through the olive groves of the Aurès, along the dusty road, at the head of his proud Augustan Legion, Trajan comes in triumphant procession. He is here at the western gate, and as he looks through the arch he can see a cheering crowd of darkskinned Berbers, with here and there a few of his Roman compatriots; beyond, a city of stately white buildings, green gardens, and fountains plashing in the clear African sunshine. It is Trajan's day, but—

The tumult and the shouting dies, The captains and the kings depart,

and as we turn away we are startled by the sight of the two giant columns of the Capitol. On a slight eminence to the left they stand, dominating and even dwarfing the entire city. From the far side we look down on Timgad. Trajan has had his day—we can see his toy arch in the distance-it is the day of the gods! This is the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and we see his worshippers crowding up the broad steps leading to the portico. Underneath the twelve great columns they go, till they throng the temple court, with its walls of rare marble and its bronze statuary. And now the garlanded priests ascend the altar stairs to the cella, where, open to the deep blue of the African sky, the figure of Jupiter stands, with Juno and Minerva on either side.

The crowds melt away, and the two grim colossi tower alone; around them other huge columns lie prone—fallen companions, vanquished Goliaths of the gods.

We retrace our steps and look along the vista of the Decumanus Maximus till it

loses itself in the lonely plain.

We can hear the tramp of the famous Roman Legion on its way from Tebessa to Lambessa, its new outpost in the West. This is a pleasant valley, and Trajan, as he passes, marks the site for the future city. Three centuries have gone, and on the road that it has laid so well the Roman Legion is flying before the invading Vandal. Another century goes by, and over this same road the Vandal retreats before the conquering army of the Byzantine. Another century strikes, and the fierce and final foe appears. He rides not in the Roman ruts, but sweeps along like an uncontrollable flood. ruin of Thamugadi is complete. The Arab has come—and gone. Not for him the pavement of the Decumanus Maximus; he is of the desert. Thamugadi, forsaken and warweary, sinks into the more kindly arms of Nature and enters upon her long last sleep. That was twelve centuries ago, and now in the crevices of the lonely rutted road are the tender green grass and the yellow flower.

We turn away, awed by the silence. On the horizon the bare hills of the Aurès wait for the spring. The deep blue sky is broken here and there by rose-tinted clouds, and the warm sunlit pillars of Timgad stand out in the clear African air. Thamugadi, thou wert beautiful in life, thou art

even more beautiful in death!

As we return, the Arabs are folding their tents and silently stealing away Next week they will return. Thamugadi, with its busy streets and its gay life, was the centre of commerce in the Aurès. It is a centre still. But it is the tent, not Thamugadi, that survives, and the Arab, lured by the dead past to the scene of his former crime, carries on his primitive barter. Changeless as the desert which is his stronghold, he will not mix with Western civilisation. On his native sand he is supreme. France has built her fine roads and covered them with motors, but the Arab Sphinx, calm and impassive, rides atop. Docile now, will he ever again be dominant?.

COWARDS OF US ALL

By LLOYD WILLIAMS

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT BAILEY

HERE had been a picnic during the day, and a dance in the evening. She had walked miles and danced for hours, so that, when she took her seat in the lift, she could hardly keep her eyes open. Indeed, she nodded drowsily as it ascended, and when it stopped she woke with a start and stepped out mechanically.

Her bedroom door was exactly opposite, and she entered yawning. Sleep! That was all she wanted, and she grumbled a little because before going to bed one is compelled to undress. Really this constant dressing and undressing is no end of a bore

when you are dead tired.

Then she stared about her in dismay, and felt surprisingly awake. She was in the wrong room. Not till afterwards did she grasp how it came about. The liftman had made a mistake. She occupied one of the cheapest rooms on the fifth floor, but although she had been staying at the Esplanade Hotel a fortnight, the liftman had put her out on the palatial first floor, and she had not noticed the error.

This bedroom was quite different from her own; it was far loftier and more spacious, and luxuriously furnished. She was half alarmed, half curious. It was a woman's room; no second glance was necessary to tell her that, for there was a fine, careless array of frocks and frills on the bed, and the toilet table was littered with gold-mounted odds and ends, together with various articles of jewellery.

"How abominably careless these rich people are!" she thought to herself. "Fancy leaving all these things with the door un-

locked ! ''

Doubtless the owner had gone to a friend's bedroom for a final gossip before retiring. Elaine stared at the expensive things in front of her, and presently just one thing caught her eye. It was a pearl necklet.

She picked it up and—

Why did she do it? What devil of mischief possessed her at that particular moment to make her do a thing from which at any

other time she would have shrunk with horror?

The necklet she had picked up closely resembled her own. She compared them; they were so alike that it required a careful inspection to detect a difference. But her own necklet was a set of well-made imitation pearls, worth, perhaps, five pounds, while the other—

She looked round the room and seemed to take in at a glance the costly things that lay there—the marten-tail muff tossed down on a sofa, the hat with an osprey that lay on the bed.

Thousands of pounds!

When she bought her own necklet out of a birthday cheque sent by an uncle, she asked the jeweller what it would be worth if it were real.

"Nearly as many thousands as you are paying pounds," he said, with a smile.

And no one but an expert could detect the difference.

In a flash she saw what a difference in her life it would make to have possession of such a sum of money. This extravagant holiday at the Esplanade, Stormouth, which had seemed the summit of her dreams while she was saving for it, would be a mere commonplace. She would be independent of the freaks of fortune that pursue those who have to work; she would hold a position.

It was done.

To the end of her life she never clearly remembered the doing of it, but she had placed the imitation necklet on the toilet table, and the other woman's jewels she had strung round her own neck.

The rest was easy, yet dreamlike.

She did not ring for the lift, but walked up flights of stairs to the fifth floor, and shut herself in her room. Then, and not till then, did she realise exactly what she had done.

She had stolen something. It was monstrous. She, who would never leave a trifling bill unpaid, who had always looked upon dishonesty as one of the weakest and least excusable vices of human nature—

scarcely better, in fact, than a disease—had branded herself as a thief.

No one knew of it; probably she would never be discovered. But she had branded herself. She could not escape an accusing something in her own heart that seemed to grin at her.

What could be done? She could not screw up her courage to return and replace the thing. She might meet the owner in the corridor or in the room itself. To explain would be too awful. Truly, conscience does make cowards of us all.

Half the night she lay awake, or, if she slept, she woke shuddering. She was accused in public. "Look at that girl! She is

wearing my necklet."

She went through the whole gamut of felony. A policeman had arrested her; she was in a cell, in a dock. A judge was passing sentence; she was in prison. Sometimes the dreams or nightmares were half comic. The policeman took the form of the boy she had danced with half that night, and he offered her chocolates. The judge was the waiter who hovered round her in the dining saloon.

There was a rap at the door.

It was nine o'clock, and the chambermaid had brought her a cup of tea. For the past hour or two youth and weariness had won, and she had slept soundly. But the knock at the door alarmed her. The sight of a comely face, with the little tea-tray, was half ludicrous by way of anti-climax.

For a long time she lay there, trying to think out a plan of righting the wrong. She did not know the number of the room she had visited, and was not even positive it was on the first floor. It might have been the second. There were two hundred rooms in the hotel.

She dressed and went down to a late breakfast; she was no fool, and she carried herself serenely, though she quaked. How amazingly easy a theft could be, granted the right circumstances! At first she shook at the sound of every voice. She expected someone to say: "You are Miss Greatorex, I believe. Will you be so good as to step into the manager's office?" She scanned the face of her waiter, expecting to see a sinister grin; she looked round at late breakfasters, wondering which woman she had robbed.

"You are jolly late," said a gay voice.
"I suppose last night's racket knocked you up."

"I woke late," she said, with a smile.

"I've had a dip and played a set of tennis.

May I feed at your table?"

The boy she had danced with last night beamed admiration upon her. He was a nice fellow—twenty-five, perhaps, with the perfectly balanced unaffected manners of the well-born. She did not know his name, but fancied it was Allison.

"What is your game to-day?" he asked "I wonder if you would come for a jolly old picnic in the Glen? I know two nice lads from the little old village and some stunning girls. The idea is to hire donkeys and do the affair in style. What do you

say?"

"I am going home to-day."

"You are? Oh, I say, that's too bad!" His dismay was ludicrous, and her own truant heart gave an excited throb out of all proportion to the affair. Why had she said she was going home? She had not intended to leave until the end of the week. She had turned coward. She could not face a growing intimacy with this nice boy. She must snap it off instantly; it might mean too much.

"You didn't say anything about it last night," he said. "Must you really go?"

"I'm afraid so. Something has happened

that makes it necessary."

Can a person play the coward and yet look perfectly courageous and composed? She spoke with the smiling ease of truth, though she was running away from her own fate.

The Boy—henceforth in her mind he would always be the Boy—pleaded with her, but she was firm. She must leave that morning, and as soon as the meal was over she asked for her account and packed her box. Later, as the hotel omnibus took her to the station, she saw a party of jolly people riding along the road towards the Glen. She looked for the Boy. He was not with them. Had he abandoned the picnic because she was not one of the party? His last words had been a request for her address, and she had refused to give it. She must force herself to forget him, and this place, and everything that had happened here.

"Don't think me a prig," she pleaded, white of face and shaking, though she looked quite calm, "but there is a good reason why I ought not to give you my address.

We will forget last night."

"Just as you please."
He stiffened a little, for she had wounded his feelings.

"I hope I didn't do or say anything to

offend you," he murmured. "It was all

a joke. I thought you liked me."
"I do. Oh, I do—really!" she said impulsively. "It's because—well, I can't

explain."

They parted in confusion and with barely a touch of the hand, yet last night they had kissed and kissed again.

II.

There never was a more ludicrous thief. She had "got away with the swag," and she had never even looked at it since. A couple of years had passed; she still went to the City daily, and a pearl necklet lay at the bottom of her box. It had not been sold or worn; it had not even seen the light of day. She hated it. She hated the

thought of it.

In all probability the owner of the real pearls had never discovered the exchange. and she had certainly derived no benefit from it. But she could not excuse herself. The thing had been done, and it was a low, wicked, and abominable thing. Regarded from a purely business point of view, she could not acquit herself. Suppose the owner of the pearls wished to raise money on them! She might count on this as security. some freak of fortune she might be driven to realising it for food and lodging.

The wrong could not be undone without incriminating herself beyond hope, and she could not escape the feeling that, until the wrong was set right and she had made full reparation, she would never know what it

was to be happy.

However, she was too young and healthy to grow morbid, and no one guessed that her conscience had a secret pain. the burden sobered her character, and when she was selected to take charge of the department where she worked, no one questioned her fitness. She was brought into the unusual position of being required, at the age of four-and-twenty, to control a staff of girls, many of whom were ten years older than herself.

Yet a subtle change had come over her, almost too delicate to be thrown into words: there was a sober self-control in her face that was strangely winning, and, above all, a gentleness in discussing others that commanded respect. In the office she invariably quashed censorious chatter. Her eyes had been opened to the fact that people sometimes do wicked things in spite of themselves.

Once she saw the Boy. With another

girl she had taken stalls for a new play, and he sat a few rows in front of her. The sight of him was at once a pleasure and a vexation. She dreaded being recognised.

Holidays came yearly, but three years passed before she could again face scenes that memory made too familiar. She had come to a decision. She would shake off this load. She would deliberately spend a holiday in the same hotel in the remote hope of easing her conscience. It was just possible that she would meet the person she had robbed, or that some chance accident would help her to trace her. If that failed, she would deliberately raise money on the row of pearls and give the whole sum to a charity. Until it was cut out of her life she could never know ease of mind.

"Found you at last!"

His voice was the first she heard as she stepped out of the train at Stormouth Station. He had come to buy a magazine,

and saw her by sheer chance.

"By Jove, I am jolly glad to see you!" "Do you know I have he said eagerly. come to this place every year, since we first met, in the hope that you would return. I'm growing into an old stager. How fit and jolly you look! Yet you've changed."

It was odd how natural and familiar the sight of him was, and the sense of reluctance to meet him had vanished. She felt as if suddenly they had been transported back to the day of the great dance, when intimacy

grew so alarmingly.

He took charge of her luggage and derided the idea of using the hotel omnibus; he would have a taxi for her and her belongings-indeed, it looked as if he wanted to

charter the fleet of taxis.

"You must sit at our table," he said. "I've got a jolly old aunt down here. Quite a sport in her way, and I bet you like her. Did you bring a racket? There's a dance to-night, a jamboree to-morrow, and a water carnival Thursday. I'll enter you for all the events, and you can start in which Of course you're my partner you fancy. in the doubles."

There was no resisting him or Fate itself. She was caught up in a whirl of jolly fun, and she found herself, as luck would have it, back in the very room she occupied before. She was introduced at dinner to the aunt, and was not in the least overawed by the fact that she was Lady Ellerton. She even found that Ellerton was the Boy's name, and not Allison, and that was quite a step towards real intimacy, though she

had "Frank'd" him within half an hour of their very first meeting.

To know a person's surname is a far surer sign of friendship than calling him "Bill."

It was a whirl of delight. There were scores of young people—or was it millions? —who swam, played tennis and croquet, picnicked, quarrelled, made love, and danced together, from early morning until very late at night. They were all Mary and Tony and Jacko and Elaine as a matter of course, and old stagers watched them with eyes of envy.

How would it end? She asked herself that again and again, but felt she no longer cared. She and the Boy were partners in everything; other couples became attached and detached several times a day, but

Frank and she were inseparable.

Good judges described it as a "case."

Yet when his proposal arrived—within three days of reunion-it found her unready. Šhe could not possibly say "No" to him, yet to say "Yes" seemed a devastating task. III.

It was not a mere holiday proposal, a "let's-kiss-and-be-sweethearts"; it was a lifelong contract which he offered with an undercurrent of feeling only half concealed by an Englishman's restraint.

"I have been looking for you ever since we parted three years ago, and there has never been another girl for me, and never will be," he said. "That's all. I am offering all there is of me—nothing to sing a song about, Elaine—but if it's possible for a man to make a girl happy, I will do that for you. Will you let me try?"

Was she an unspeakable coward? Is a girl entitled to marry a man when she has done a thing from which he would recoil in horror? Suppose, by some unlucky chance, she were unmasked! Suppose that very day a woman arrived at the hotel who

remembered her!

"It was rather unkind to cut off like you did three years ago," he said. "You gave me no chance, and I have wondered since if I offended you. Did I?"

She was too preoccupied to answer.

"The first thing I did, when we met again, was to look at your finger to see if there was a tell-tale ring of another engagement, and when I saw you were free I nearly shouted," he said. "I wanted to stand on

"I'm thankful you didn't do that," she

said demurely.

"Tell me, Elaine, if I offended, am I forgiven? And if I'm not forgiven, would you mind marrying me? I'll win forgiveness as quickly as I can."

She looked at him with a smile that, though she didn't know it, was half motherly.

"Are you sure this is real, Frank," she asked, "or are you being led away by a romantic idea? We are strangers to one another?"

"We are not," he said earnestly. have known you all my life. I knew you before either of us was born. We were created for one another—I for you, and you for me. How can we be strangers?"

"We have danced together and played tennis, been for a few walks and had a few What else?" she asked, pleasant chats. with a woman's disconcerting grip on common-sense. "And now you say you want to spend all your life with me."

"What about you?" he asked, peering into her eyes thoughtfully. "How do you feel about it? That's what matters. It's no good to tell me I'm a donkey-perhaps I am—but suppose you were in a similar plight? What then? Even the wisest of women have been known to fall in love with men who were totally unworthy of them."

The jesting thrust went home, and she

coloured.

"We will keep to my side of the argument," she said firmly. "You don't really know me. Suppose I were a bad character?"

"In that case we shall have to suppose that two sides of a triangle are not greater than the third—which is absurd, as Mr. Euclid feelingly remarked."

"Never mind Mr. Euclid," she persisted. " I always loathed him. If I told you I was

a thief, what would you say?"

"I should say you were also an untruther," he remarked. "Well, I am!"

"Very well, dear, you're a thief," he said indulgently. "But that won't prevent our getting married just before Christmas. It will be a lark, hanging up our stockings

"I do wish you would be serious," she said, with a queer strain in her voice. "You think I am joking, but I'm not. I don't mean that I'm a habitual thief. I don't live by picking pockets or doing silly things of that sort, but I'm a thief, all the same. When I ran away from you three years ago, it was because I had stolen something the night before, and I was too ashamed toto let you write to me."

His face became grave, and for some time he made no remark; then he took her hand in his and stroked it. He seemed to be thinking it over as a new sort of puzzle, and she was more moved by the affectionately dumb caress than she would have been by a volume of words. But she was determined the horror of it. I gave way to a mad impulse, but the thing couldn't be put right. I don't know the name of the person I robbed, and, without positively

labelling myself a malefactor, I can't find it out. I've still got it—I mean the thing I



"Frank positively threw his cup and saucer down, and succeeded in breaking both without difficulty. . . . He would have to destroy the hotel in order to reduce her to silence."

that this should be looked at with cool eyes and not through the mists of emotion.

"I expect it made you feel hatefully miserable," he said at last. "What did you do about it?"

"Nothing," she said fiercely. "That's

stole—and I can't get rid of it. It lives with me. Sometimes I dream about it."

"We are drifting far from the point," he murmured, after a pause. "I should like to discuss this with you, and hear all the details, if you care to tell me. But, first, I

am entitled to an answer to my question. Do you care for me enough to marry me?"
"No, I won't—never!" she said.

you are done for. Of course I don't want to do it. I want you to surrender peacefully. But that isn't the real question. I don't



"'I was the girl who took your necklet, Lady Ellerton,' she said firmly."

"Oh, yes, you will. You will have to marry me," he retorted. "I have it in my power to blackmail you. I need only go to a constable and say, 'This young lady is a thief, and you will find millions of pounds' worth of stolen property in her trunk,' and

ask if you will marry me. I shall insist upon

that. I want to know if you care for me."

"I won't answer," she said, scarcely able now to keep back the tears. "If it only concerned you and me, perhaps-but marriage isn't like that. I can't be happy

until I get rid of the load. I've got a silly feeling—I dare say it sounds babyish and superstitious-that I'm not forgiven until I get rid of it."

"If the load is as heavy as all that, it will need two pairs of shoulders to get it along the road," he said gently. "Tell me

the story, Elaine."

She told him just what had happened,

and produced the row of pearls.

"The woman who owned them was rich, and no doubt they are worth no end of money," she said dismally. "I came here again hoping that some accident would throw light on it, but I have had no luck. If only I could get rid of the hateful things, I might feel happier."

He looked at the necklet musingly, and gave it back. "You might chuck it into the sea," he said. "That would be one way

of getting rid of it."

'I have no right to do that," she replied;

"it isn't mine."

He glanced at her shrewdly. "You are a conscientious little malefactor, my dear," he said. "But we won't talk about it any Perhaps I shall hit on a way of relieving your conscience. Let's have some I made a sort of promise to Aunt Deborah that we would join her in her own sitting-room. Do you mind?"
"Not at all," she said rather wearily.

"But I don't think Lady Ellerton would care about having me for a guest if she knew

what I have just told you.

"She doesn't know," he said drily.
They strolled back to the hotel, and he talked as gaily as if nothing had happened. She tried to respond, but it was not easy. The confession seemed to have renewed her

old agony.

Lady Ellerton received them smilingly, and a tremendous array of cream meringues and the like garnished the table. She had taken a fancy to Elaine—though she was rather a severe old party—and the latter would have appreciated it, had she not been tortured by remorse.

"Come and sit down, my dear," said Lady Ellerton. "It's a wonder to me you don't get tired of rushing about the world with that nephew of mine. He'll have you burnt black by the time your holiday is Try to remember, Frank, that Miss Greatorex doesn't want to be turned into a negress, and give her a meringue."

But the meringues soon lost their charm, for, before Elaine realised it, the conversation took an unpleasant turn. Frank made a maladroit remark about "locking bedroom doors."

"You can't be too careful in an hotel," said his aunt. "Three years ago I lost a

necklace in this place."

Elaine felt as if the meringue would choke her. Surely it was not Frank's aunt she had robbed! But, alas, things always happen in the most awkward way, and, having started on her story, Lady Ellerton proceeded.

"I had taken off my pearls and run along to a friend's room for a gossip, my dear," she said. "It was certainly rather late—three in the morning, I should think —but, believe me, I wasn't gone more than ten minutes. And when I came back, behold, someone had been in the room and taken my necklet. Frank always declared it was one of the servants, but that was nonsense, because there are no servants about the place at that hour."

Elaine looked at her meringue with repulsion; it was a puzzle to her how people could eat such things. To her disgust, too, Frank seemed to be enjoying his aunt's revelations; you might suppose that even a man would realise the horror of the situation.

"Go on, aunt. Tell us the whole joke. It will make Elaine laugh! These meringues are stunning. I'm going to have just one

He tackled his third, and at that moment

Elaine felt she hated him.

"I'm satisfied it was a visitor," said Lady "Some greedy woman must Ellerton. have.come along the corridor, seen my door open, and peeped in. You know what people are!"

Elaine nodded dumbly. Oh, yes, she knew what people were. It would have been a great relief if she could have screamed.

"She saw my necklet lying on the dressing-table, and helped herself," said Lady Ellerton grimly. "People have no conscience. Still, I don't complain. me your cup, dear."

Elaine passed her cup like a person demanding a second helping of prussic acid.

"You see, the thief didn't get anything worth having," continued Lady Ellerton, with the air of a person who enjoyed a subtle joke. "I have often laughed at the thought. No doubt she thought she had got away with something valuable, for 1 do possess a row of costly pearls, but Im not such a goose as to wear them in hotels, my dear. The real pearls were at the bank.

The necklet that I lost was imitation. I don't suppose it cost a sovereign. amusing thing is that the thief left her own pearls in place of mine, and they were better imitations than mine—so good, indeed, that only an expert could tell the difference."

Elaine put down her cup because she could not trust herself to hold it. Frank was grinning at her, and mercifully his aunt was busying herself with the tea-pot. What had happened was simple enough. Three years ago Lady Ellerton stayed at this hotel, but, like her nephew, arrived only the night before Elaine left; probably they did not even meet, and consequently, on her second visit, Elaine did not recognise her.

The girl's heart gave a bound of relief; she had distressed herself about nothing. She had done no one an injury. another thought came. The intention was the same; the lack of injury was merely an accident, and only one thing was left to her. She must confess. She must tell Frank's aunt the truth, and so have rest for her troublesome conscience.

"It's strange you should tell me this, Lady Ellerton," she began, "because I am the girl who——"

"One moment, my dear." Frank's aunt had rung for a waiter, and she now commanded him to bring more tea. "I said tea," she remarked, "not hot water."

"Vairy good, my lady," said the German gentleman who came from Switzerland.

"What were you going to say, Miss Greatorex?"

But Frank had enjoyed his little joke, and he didn't want Elaine to be too communicative. After all, aunts are only human, and he did not wish the great lady to conceive a violent dislike for his sweetheart.

"It's time we were cutting along, Elaine," he said. "We promised to give Jacko and Dahlia a licking at tennis."

"Do let the girl rest a minute, Frank," said his aunt. "She was just going to tell me something. She looks so white that I'm sure she doesn't want any more tennis

"Yes, I have something to tell you," "It's about the necklace. said Elaine.

Frank positively threw his cup and saucer down, and succeeded in breaking both without difficulty. They were honestly worth ninepence, but five shillings would be charged in the bill.

However, the lady he designed to marry had a singularly strong character of her own; you could not stop her by merely breaking a cup and saucer. He would have to destroy the hotel in order to reduce her to silence. Even the re-entry of the Hun did no more than postpone the trouble.

"I was the girl who took your necklet. Lady Ellerton," she said firmly. "I have it here, and this afternoon I told Frank all about it."

"You took it! You—you came into my

room and—and——"

For once in her life Lady Ellerton was embarrassed. After all, when you invite a girl to tea, with the sure and certain knowledge that your favourite nephew is going to marry her, you do not expect her to confess to felony.

"Yes, I took your necklace and left my own behind, fully believing that yours was worth a great deal of money," said Elaine "That is all I have to say, and faintly.

and I think I had better go now."

She had got out the fatal words, but had no heart to offer the explanations she had given to Frank. Indeed, she rose to go, fully believing she had wrecked her hopes. But Frank took a hand in the affair.

"Wait a minute, dearest," he said firmly. "I cannot let you go like that. Aunt, please try to remember that Elaine and I are going to be married almost at once before you jump to conclusions."

"We are not going to be married at all,"

said Elaine. "Please let me go.'

"I'll be hanged if I do!" he said truculently. "My aunt is a very sensible, worldly, wicked old woman, and when she knows all, I shall be content to abide by her Elaine entered your room by decision. accident, aunt, mistaking it for her own. She had nearly danced her pretty head off that night, and I had been her partner."

"That, at any rate, mitigates the offence," said his aunt grimly. "I am prepared to

make allowances."

"She gave way to a sudden mad temptation," continued Frank, "and, of course, she deserves to be smacked. When we are respectably married, I shall attend to that myself. But the instant she had got away with what she imagined to be valuable plunder, she came to her senses and was filled with remorse. She ran away even from me, although she loved me."

"Oh, I didn't say that!" protested Elaine, trying not to make a fool of herself by

· laughing and crying simultaneously.

"She has hidden from me for three years, and she has dragged your confounded imitation pearls about with her all the time in the hope of restoring them. When I proposed this afternoon, she refused to marry me, although she was dying to say 'Yes,' and insisted on confessing everything. I knew you were the victim of her wickedness, and I tripped you into telling the story to relieve her conscience, but I didn't bargain on her telling you the whole truth."

He suddenly swung round, caught Elaine

in his arms, and held her closely.

"That's where she's a ripper!" he said excitedly. "She couldn't be content with half measures. She was determined to humiliate herself for the slip, and, hang it, I'll never give her up! I should be sorry to quarrel with you, aunt, and you can leave your jolly old money where you like; but I'm going to marry Elaine, and if you don't like it, you must—"

To his great surprise, his aunt rose, took Elaine forcibly from his arms, and positively

pushed him out of the room.

"When once a man starts talking, no one else can get a word in edgeways," she

said quietly. "Just give me a kiss, my dear child. Most of us have done things that are wrong, but we have not all had the courage to own up. Frank's a dear boy, and if you don't make him a good wife, it will be his fault and not yours. So you ran away from him because you were ashamed of yourself!"

Elaine tried to say she didn't think she could possibly deserve to be forgiven, but

she was not allowed to talk.

"My dear child, I don't see why we should be humbugs," said his aunt. "If there's more joy over a sinner that repents, I don't see why there shouldn't be joy in the heart of a worldly old woman who has been doing wrong things all her life, but has never properly repented. Your eyes are rather red, and I recommend you to bathe them. You can run into my bedroom, and when you feel ready to face the world, I venture to say you will find my nephew sitting on the top stair, waiting for you."

Lady Ellerton proved to be surprisingly

right.



THE HIDDEN WOOD.

BELOW the cliff's wild edge is hung
A clinging wood of spindling trees,
Where never nightingale has sung,
But the hawk swings there o'er the sea's

Ancient unrest, near fallen broods
Of vasty rock with grass o'ergrown—
A wood high-niched in solitudes
And awful steepness of torn stone.

I cannot reach that wood, but Dream
Treads it: Its semblance it shall keep
Among the mystic views agleam
Within the solitudes of sleep!

VICTOR PLARR.

WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW

By MRS. COMYNS CARR

ILLUSTRATED BY WYNDHAM ROBINSON

H, I really don't know what is the matter with Bob," said Mrs. Charley Young half testily to the apparently unsympathetic figure of the man in the armchair by the fire. "I can't help thinking there is something wrong with his affairs, but exactly what it is, Heaven only knows!"

"Why don't you ask him, then?" said

John Houghton quietly.

"Ask him!" laughed she. "Now, really, John, that shows an extraordinary lack of perspicacity in you. You can't know Bob very well if you don't know that asking him would not be of much use, if he didn't mean to tell."

"No, not if he didn't mean to tell; but, well"—whimsically—"I supposed that people who were engaged generally spoke

frankly to one another.'

"Did you? Don't I know plenty of people who are married—and don't you know them, too—who never speak frankly to one another?"

"A man doesn't care to talk to a woman about his money matters, not even when she is his wife," said John Houghton evasively, and apparently feeling it his duty to fight the battles of the absent.

Mrs. Charley shrugged her shoulders as she got up and walked across to the window that looked out on the little balcony of a dainty house on the old Chelsea Embank-

"Perhaps men and women never can, and never will, understand one another,' she remarked, apparently irrelevantly.

She did not say it bitterly or even cynically, but just with a little half-humorous and wholly kindly smile as who should say: "And it's all owing to the men's stupidity."

She was not a beautiful woman, Mrs.

Charley Young, not even a very pretty woman, and yet she always passed for one. Some said it was because of her strangely alluring figure and gait, and because she dressed so cunningly; others put it down to her whimsical smile or to the compelling magic of the dark blue eyes that looked at you so straight from under the straight brows and out of the pale yet never sickly face.

" Men and women aren't meant to understand one another," declared John Houghton emphatically from that seat beside the wide fireplace, where he was sharpening a pencil with apparent absorption in the

task.

"That's just like you, John," laughed "And yet, do you know, it's awfully tiresome when one can't make folk under-

stand, try how one will.'

John's keen eyes glanced up for a moment and rested with tolerant affection on the willowy figure silhouetted against the few bare trees of the little garden, with the winter sun sending red rays up the river beyond them; but as the figure only presented a straight, firm back to his kindly gaze, he turned it away again and resumed his occupation.

"It would be a dreary business if we could understand everything and everybody," he said. "No fun left in life," and he added in a low voice, "and no poetry."

"That's because you're a scientist, and a philanthropist, and all sorts of other 'ists," she whipped out, with a pretence of temper. "I often wonder how it is we've been such good friends for so long, considering you're so much cleverer than I am."

"Am I?"

"Oh, well, I don't know that you are really! "-with a laugh. "Sometimes I think you are the stupidest man I ever met, John."

"Am I?" repeated he.

"Yes, in ways of—well, in all the ways in which women are clever; and it is very tiresome and awkward, of course, when a man can never see anything unless it is planked down in staring black and white. However "—with a little sigh—" I am not sure that it is not more comfortable to have to do with people who underrate themselves than with those who think such a precious lot more of themselves than one can manage to agree with."

Mrs. Charley had returned to the fireside, and was seated in a low chair, gazing into the embers, while she toyed absently with the long chain that she wore round

her neck.

"You're pleased to be enigmatical to-day, ma'am," smiled the man, fitting the point protector on to his pencil, now sharpened to his satisfaction, and putting it in his pocket.

"Just another proof of how utterly wanting in perspicacity you are," retorted

she

He looked at her tolerantly.

"You're tetchy, my dear. Is it all about Bob Carden's affairs? Do they weigh so heavily on you as that? But what does money matter, after all, if two people love one another?"

Mrs. Charley said nothing, but to anyone with that true perspicacity that she so much extolled, the mere sudden uplifting of her little dark head and the half smile that she turned towards him would have suggested the sceptical echo of his own word "if."

"Besides," added he, "surely you have

enough for both?"

She jumped up, throwing out her hands

in a petulant little gesture.

"Well, you really are stupid!" she said, standing in front of him almost as though she would strike him. He looked at her, still puzzled, still kindly.

"Yes, I suppose I am," he said presently. "For I suppose you mean that the man whom you could love would not be the man who could be content to think that you have

enough for both?"

"Precisely," she said. "Besides, perhaps I haven't. There's little Bill, you know. People may fancy, because the boy isn't my own, that I shouldn't mind cheating him; but that's where they may be wrong. Just because I—well, didn't get on too well

with his father during our very short married life, I mean to be all the more just towards the boy. If Charley hadn't made so many unlucky speculations and died suddenly, he would have seen to it. As it is, there's nothing but the handsome sum he settled on me when we married. So I shall see to it."

"Naturally," said the man. "That's only

cricket. And the boy is a nice boy."

"And that mayn't leave me as much as Bob thinks."

John Houghton turned sharply.

"Thinks!" echoed he. "What? You haven't been frank with him, either?"

She blushed—a bright sudden blush. "Not yet," she answered in a low voice.

"Oh, Maimie, why?"

"I—well, I had my reasons."

She lifted her eyes and looked at him defiantly. The blush had faded. But John

Houghton shook his head.

"Not fair play, Maimie! Not fair play," he declared gently, "because, without wanting to marry a woman for her money, a man might justly feel incensed at being deceived into thinking it was more than it really was."

Her little chin went up.

"I haven't deceived him," she said.

" He never asked."

"I should think not!" he said. "That's a prevarication, and you know it. You have the reputation of having been left well off, haven't you? It would have stood in your light with some men," he added pensively. "It shows how he cared for you."

He was not looking at her. He was too much absorbed in the earnest reflections he was making, or he might have been puzzled further at the expression on her face.

"Money's a dreadful nuisance," said she

half petulantly.

He smiled.

"And yet you wouldn't like to be quite without it, my dear. You make a very good use of it, but I admit it wants looking at sensibly and putting in its proper place."

"Yes, that's just it, and people never do that. That's why I thought it best—"

She stopped, confused.

"You thought it best to deceive poor Bob Carden?"

She looked vexed for a moment, but

finally decided to laugh.

"Well, well, I don't wonder," said he indulgently. "You wanted him; it's quite natural. He's a charming fellow—one of the most charming I ever met."

She turned away and stooped to make

up the fire.

"Let me do that," he said, taking the poker from her hand, and adding at the same time: "But you must make a clean breast of it to-day.'

"Oh, yes, I meant to do that," said she

- "And don't let any little foolish temper spoil things. It would be a thousand pities if any difficulty should occur between you and Bob for such a really unimportant matter—and when you're so well suited to one another, too." He was standing over her now where she still knelt before the fire. "I must talk to him about his affairs," he
- "You talk to him!" she flashed out. "As if you weren't just as stupid about money as you are about other things."

John Houghton looked down on her with a rueful expression on his strong, gentle

"I am catching it to-day!" said he. "It doesn't seem as if I could be of any

"No, not in this matter," said she. am better able to manage Bob Carden than you are, any day."

"That's a good thing, as you're going to

marry him."

"Oh, well, I suppose so," sighed she. "It's an odd world, anyhow."

He made a little gesture almost as if he would have touched her, and then drew his hand back.

"Don't be down-hearted! These little rubs always happen between engaged people, so I am told. Everything will be all right, you'll see. His money troubles may all be in your imagination, and if there is anything, it is probably only some momentary embarrassment that will soon be settled."

"Yes, but it depends in what way it is settled," retorted she. "There are ways and

ways.

John Houghton laughed quite heartily.

"You certainly are upset, Maimie," he said. "But I guess what you mean. You mean it's not going to be all his way. So you think. But one never knows with a woman. He'll twist you round his little finger, I bet. A good-looking fellow like that always does."

"That's all you know about women, you blessed old dreamer," said she, with a great air of superiority. "I've no use for being twisted or for twisting, either. That's not

what I call fair."

He was about to reply, but at that moment the sound of a ring and a double knock made him halt, and altered the expression on both their faces.

' I suppose you are expecting Bob Carden now?" he said, holding out his hand. "I'll

go."

"Oh, no, don't go," said she quickly. "I'd much rather you didn't. particularly to see you after he has left. Do stay and dine—I have got a nice girl for you!"

"I don't like girls," said he, with a little frown, "and, what's more, they don't like

"Oh, this one's engaged," said Mrs. Charley quickly, "so you can be as nasty or as nice to her as you like, and no harm done. I'm sure you've got plenty of letters to write—you always have. Go into the library and get them done, while Bob and I have it out.'

"Well, don't be too severe on him. You'll repent it if you are," said he, as the door opened and a handsome man entered unannounced, with the familiar air of an habitué, and advanced smiling towards the hostess, holding her hand just the instant longer which is required to denote the engaged state.

'Good morrow, belle dame sans merci!" said he gaily, with not quite the obsequious air that might have been expected of him. "Who are you going to be severe upon? Not me, I hope."

He had turned, holding out his hand to John Houghton, while Mrs. Charley flushed with evident vexation, and said nothing.

"Ah, Mrs. Young is in a severe mood to-day," said John Houghton pleasantly. "I have been told some home-truths, so I warn you! But I'll leave you to fight out the merits of your case, Carden; I've no doubt you'll do it better than I did. just polish off a couple of letters in the library, Maimie, if you'll permit it. But I'll see you again. I want my sailing orders, as I've a chance of giving Billy an exeat from school to-morrow."

"Oh, are you going to take him out? How good of you!" cried she.

"Not at all! Billy is a very amusing person—I like his company. A tantôt!"

He went out, and Mrs. Charley threw herself into the chair by the fire, while the newcomer observed her rather furtively from the hearthrug.

He was a tall, slender, well-knit fellow, graceful in every movement, but with a

gracefulness more suggestive of the feline species than of the typical British lion. His tall body was surmounted by a small head, with short, sleek fair hair, and his narrow face, with the pointed chin, boasted a pair of rather languorous velvety brown

eyes.
"So your friend has been fighting my battles," said he in a soft, purring voice, as he drew a small chair close to her and sat down, bending over her, his long slender fingers lightly resting on her arm. "What need was there for it? What have I done

to offend you?"

"Don't be silly, Bob!" she said petulantly. "You've done nothing to offend me

"Then what home-truths am I going to hear?"

She was silent, as if bracing herself.

"Well, it's just that I want you to be a little more frank with me than you have been. There is a sort of uncomfortable feeling in my mind that you have got something you want to say to me, and that you don't like to say it."

He drew himself a trifle away and bent

over the fire, warming his hands.

"What in the world put that into your head? There are lots of little things that a man doesn't always say to a woman."
"Oh, you admit it!" said she. "Well,

that's what I don't care about."

He turned round, smiling.

"Now, really, Maimie, that's not like you. You are so clever, you ought to know better than to say such a foolish thing. There are heaps of things that women don't say to men, either. It would be a great mistake; the men would not understand them, and it is just the same vis-à-vis men to women."

" Little things, trivial things, I dare say; but I was thinking of things that count."

"And aren't we at one in things that count?" He took her hand, but she withdrew it gently and proceeded to mend the fire.

"Well, you're right," said she, without replying to his question. "Women are just as much lacking in frankness. But I mean to put that straight."

He passed his hand over his hair.

"Come, don't let's get moralising," said he. "That would be a dull way of spending an afternoon. I don't want you to put anything straight. I like things as they are. Did you look over that house again?" He spoke in a totally different voice now, as

one who wished to dismiss an unpleasant subject.

''No," said she curtly.

"Oh, I'm sorry; it seemed to me to be so exactly the house we wanted, and the agent said there were several people after it."

She looked him straight in the eyes. "It is too expensive for us," she said.

He glanced at her.

"Too expensive?" murmured he. And he shifted his eyes when she did not answer

"Well, I thought it might be," said she deliberately. "To tell you the truth, I have thought lately, Bob, from one or two remarks you have made, that things were not going so well with you as they were when you asked me to marry you, and that you might not be able to afford such a high rent."

He rose and stood warming his back, looking down pensively at his immaculately

varnished boots.

"What rent do you pay for this house?" was his evasive answer.

"I don't rent it. My late husband

bought the freehold."

"Oh! Well, I suppose these picturesque houses have quite a fair value, though I've often wondered how you could stand being so far out of things. So this belongs to you? Then you could sell it."

"Oh, no! It belongs to Billy."

"To-the boy? I should have thought he would have left the house to you and provided for his boy differently."

Mrs. Charley clasped her hands across her knees—a trick she had when in an

obstinate mood.

"He didn't provide for the boy at all," said she slowly.

The man started.

"What do you mean, then?" said he, with an uneasy laugh. "You said—

"I said the house belonged to Billy. So it does—or it will, because I shall give it to him."

"What?" exclaimed Carden in a voice

that was almost a snarl.

"I shall spend most of what Mr. Young left on his son while he is a minor, and make it over to him when he's of age.

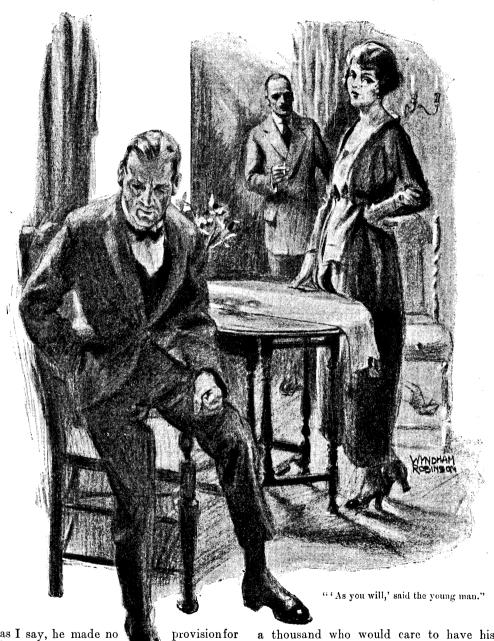
"Why?" stammered the young man,

his lips rather white.

"Well, I consider that I only hold the money in trust for him, as it were. When I married Mr. Young, he was a rich man, and settled an extravagant sum on me.

Later he lost largely, and died before he could make fresh arrangements. In fact, he left his affairs in utter confusion, and,

I shall make a home for Billy; but there's only one man in a thousand "-she just paused and repeated softly-" ves, one in



as I say, he made no his boy.

"I see," muttered Bob Carden. "But you aren't

"But you aren't obliged to make over all you have to the lad."
"No, not obliged; but if I marry again I shall do so. Of course, if I remain single,

a thousand who would care to have his wife's stepson living in his house, so the money won't be much more than Billy will need at college and so on."

"Isn't that a bit quixotic?" said he,

after a pause.

"No, I don't think so. I shall have

enough without, shan't I? A woman can't be blamed for expecting her husband to

keep her, can she?"

She said it with the sort of frank innocence which had so often charmed him, and now he did not even look at her; he stood frowning, his eyes still on those immaculate

"I see," he murmured again presently. "So when you accepted me you supposed

that I was rich."

She sat quite still. There was a faint smile on her tell-tale mouth, which, if he had been clever—which he was not—might have struck him as a possible smile of contempt.

"Well, I laid myself open to that reproach," she answered at last, "so I have no right to complain. But "-innocently-

aren't you?"

"It depends on how rich you thought me," said he, not without a touch of

And at that she actually laughed.

"I deserved that thrust," she said, but then added, quite gravely: "So we both made a mistake."

He ran his hand again nervously over

his sleek hair.

"Well, this will make things a bit more difficult to arrange, won't it?"

"Things?"

"Practical things."

"Practical things! Do you mean our marriage?"

"It may have to be postponed, I'm

afraid."

"Yes, it may have to be postponed,"

echoed she slowly.

She had been sitting with her capable little hands clasped across her knees, looking down on them. But now she sat up, alert, and smiled up at him.

"Do you know, Bob, I've behaved shockingly to you."

He was silent; the silence was a not wholly flattering admission, yet she still

"Shockingly!" she repeated. "I had my reasons, and a woman always thinks her reasons are good reasons, you know. But now that I look at the thing coolly, I don't think they justified what I have done. I oughtn't to have let you think I was better off than I was. But "-with a fresh and still more ingenuous smile-" do you know I made sure you would have found out exactly what my position was before you proposed to me."

He did not say that he had done so—he did not retort that no man could foresee a woman behaving like a high-flown idiot in these days. One had got to keep a civil tongue in one's head, and possibly, too, a misgiving was shaping itself in his mind lest he might not be quite a match for an opponent whom, till this moment, he had thought so very yielding, so charmingly womanly.

"Still, I ought not to have done it," repeated she deprecatingly, after a minute. "It wasn't fair play. I honestly feel that."

He murmured something, half denial, half just anger, but wholly enigmatical.

"However," continued she, with a briskness which rather discounted her contrition, "it's never too late to mend. Perhaps this is really a blessing in disguise. It seems that, as we are neither of us so well off as we supposed, we can't afford to marry at present. Isn't that so?"

"I never went as far as that," said he

sheepishly.

"Oh, do let's go far enough to look round the corner!" she cried. "It's so tiresome not to see one's way, isn't it? I'm an extravagant woman—I won't deny If we hadn't money enough, I might outrun the constable, and where should we Because "-laughing softlybe then? you'd do the same thing!'

"We should have managed as many other people manage, I suppose," said he, not too urbanely, and quite unconscious that he had changed the tense of his verb.

"Ah, but I shouldn't care to manage as many people manage. I hate difficulties. If I marry again, I shall want a peaceful life, without any uncertainties of any sort."

She still smiled up at him, but her voice had a strange firmness that he had not

" I had far rather stay as I am than plunge

been used to associate with it.

into any uncertainties.'

"Aren't there always uncertainties?"

said he, not without a touch of pomposity. "Always! All the more reason why one shouldn't burthen oneself with those one foresees. That's a woman's way of putting it, but you know what I mean. No, Bob, you and I might have got on well enough with riches, but without them Now, don't you agree with me?"

"Well, there would have been ways-"

began he lamely.

But she interrupted him.

"Ah, what ways? The ways of the people who 'manage.' Thank you! No!

No! You know as well as I do that you agree."

She jumped up as she spoke and went over to the door on the left which was hidden

behind portières. She drew them.

"Haven't you finished writing those letters yet?" she called out gaily. "The dressing bell will ring in a minute, and Bob Carden is going. Forgive me!" said she gently, as she came back to the rejected one. "It's no good talking any more. One makes mistakes sometimes, but the quicker one acknowledges them the better. Don't you think so?"

"Then you wish to break our engagement?" His tone was odd, but she seemed to understand it, for she smiled quite frankly as she said: "Yes, please."

" As you will," said the young man, with something that was oddly like a shoulder shrug, as John Houghton came in through the curtains.

"Bob and I have finished our discussion," said she pleasantly, as she turned to the

"I hope to your mutual satisfaction," answered John Houghton, looking from one to the other a little dubiously.

"Perfectly, I think," said she. are entirely of one mind, I believe."

"That's all right."

A gong sounded through the house.

"Dear me," cried she, "how quickly the time has passed this afternoon! I must go and get ready. Madge Daker is bound to be punctual. Good-bye, Bob!" -with a quick, smiling, little nod. Then, half turning to the other man: "You won't go yet. I've several important messages for Billy."

She ran out as she spoke, and the two men stood rather awkwardly side by side.

Bob Carden knew why he felt awkward: he had been twisted round that little finger of which Mrs. Young apparently had not gauged the strength, and he knew it.

But John Houghton did not know, excepting that he was conscious of a

disturbance in the air.

"I had just written to you," said he, choosing from among a few letters which he held in his hand. "I didn't think I should have a chance of seeing you tonight, and I thought the matter might perhaps be urgent.

He handed a letter, which the other man

took with a lift of his eyebrows.

"Business?" said he. "I didn't think you were a business man, Houghton."

"I am not," answered the other, "but I know you are, and, little as I know about business, I know that there are moments when things have to be done at once or not at all."

"Yes?" said Bob Carden absently, and thinking perhaps that there were other things besides business which have to be

done on the spur of the moment.

He held the letter in his hand without opening it. He was still too much perturbed by the scene which he had gone through to be thinking of John Houghton's business.

"I am not a good hand at explanations," said the latter awkwardly, when the pause had lasted an appreciable time, "but it struck me, from something Maimie said----'

"Oh, Mrs. Charley has been confiding in you, I suppose," interrupted Carden, with a not altogether pleasant laugh. "She told you that she was going to tell me some home-truths? Well, she

"Women don't mean half the things they say," mumbled John Houghton, standing with his hands in his pockets like a rueful schoolboy, "and very often they only depend upon some trifling thing which can be put right at once."

"Do you mean put right by oneself or put right by someone else for one?" asked Bob Carden, with the same laugh.

"Well, both," said the other reluctantly. "But-there, I think I have put it better in my letter! Take it home and read it, and if I can be of any use, be sure and let me know."

"Thank you," said Carden shortly, putting the letter in his pocket. "I will."

Mrs. Charley's voice sounded upstairs, giving an order to a servant, and Bob Carden seized his hat.

"Good night," said he hastily. "I must be off. I've to dine out. Many thanks."

And he literally bolted out of the door, leaving John Houghton half perplexed and half amused on the hearthrug.

"Was that Bob?" asked Mrs. Charley, coming in. "He seems to have been in a

tearing hurry."

"He just remembered that he had to dine

" Yes, I knew he was dining out with that old Cræsus, Sir Thomas Morier, and his plain daughter."

"But I think he was a bit upset, too, Maimie," John Houghton went on. without heeding. "What have you been doing to him?"

His tone must have been a bit incisive,

for she answered quickly—

"Now, don't be peremptory, please! I've done just what I meant to do—what I ought to have done long ago."

" And that is ? "

"I've given him to understand that it would not be advisable that we should marry." This was said with haughty dignity.

"Good gracious!" murmured John Houghton, falling into an unwonted vernacular in his amazement. Then, after a minute: "You've treated that man very

badly."

"I know that—I told him so. I deserve to be scolded. I—did it partly out of pique."

"Pique? What on earth was there to

pique you?"

"Something which I'm afraid you will never understand, you dear soul."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Money, of course. It's futile to repeat that it's the root of all evil. Did you make a clean breast of your share in that misunderstanding—as you promised?"

"Oh, quite! I had made up my mind to do that, when next I saw him, without any prompting!" With a wicked little smile: "That was to be my test."

He turned on her sharply.

"Test? Now, you don't mean to say, Maimie, that you've played another trick

on that poor devil?"

"I don't know about trick. I meant to make sure he wasn't marrying me for my money." With the same smile: "And, if it was a trick, it answered—he was."

" How do you know?"

"You should have seen him cool when I told him the money was really Billy's!"

"Nonsense! Besides, it isn't. At least, it need not be."

She looked at him.

"Now, you know perfectly well that if if you were in the same circumstances, you'd want that money spent on Billy."

He turned away.

"That has nothing to do with the case, my dear, has it? Of course, any honest man would want the boy properly looked after. But Billy doesn't want all the money at present; he would have his home with you as before——"

"Ah, but what sort of a home? Can you see Bob Carden as a wise and affectionate

sort of step-father-in-law?"

The man did not answer. Instead, he walked to the window and stood with his back to her—as *she* had stood half an hour ago—watching the river, with the lights of wharves and buildings now sending their dancing reflections where the red glow had lain before.

"I think you've behaved pretty shabbily,

you know, Maimie."

"Haven't I confessed that I have?" this rather petulantly. "But it's better to behave badly before one's married than afterwards, isn't it?"

"Why should you do either?"

"Because there was only one way of living comfortably with Bob Carden, and that was to have plenty of money. And there wasn't going to be plenty of money."

He did not move.

"Well," said he, "as I told you, I am sure that Carden's embarrassments are only of a passing nature. So much am I convinced of it, that I have offered to lend him some money to help him through the crisis."

She jumped up.

"You have offered to lend him money!" cried she. "What on earth did you do that for?"

"I thought—" began he nervously.

"You don't mean to say you did it for my sake?" Then, as he reddened and frowned:

"You dear old goose!"

"Well, it's hard on a man to lose not only his money, but the woman he loves through a mere piece of passing ill-luck," stammered John, troubled and nonplussed.

She looked up at him whimsically; she

could have laughed, but she refrained.

"I think Bob will get over it," said she quietly. "I'm sorry you wasted your generosity. But I don't think he'll accept. Even he——" And she stopped.

"—would be too proud," he finished for her. "But the whole thing is too ridicu-

lously quixotic!"

"That's what he said," murmured she,

with a little smile.

"Well, by Jove, the poor fellow was right!" declared John Houghton. "Here's a man whom you like—you must have liked him or you wouldn't have got engaged to him—a man who adores you, and would have looked after you—and you need looking after, you know, Maimie—and you send him about his business upon a mere quibble."

"It isn't a mere quibble," said she. "I regard it as the whole gist of the matter."

"I am afraid you are making a mistake,"

said he seriously. "Cutting off your nose to spite your face. You're not the woman to live alone, you know."

She looked up at him.

"No," said she. "I know that. I suppose it was the knowledge of that that ever let me get as far as an engagement. He was nice at tea-time, when one had got the hump, or to take one to the theatre-charming, in fact, handsome and gay, and - well, pleasantly flattering. One doesn't get much of that nowadays, and it is nice, you know. But companionship, however agreeable, is not everything. Oh "-with a little shudder -" fancy having to support the perpetual companionship of a man whom one did not respect! No "-shaking her head wisely-"I am not such a fool as you think, John. I might never have seen how stupid I was if it hadn't been for this little money disturbance; but it is a blessing in disguise, you know.''

She came up to him and put her hand on

his arm.

"Don't disagree with me," she said. "I assure you it is better to be ever so lonely

than ill-mated."

"Poor Maimie!" murmured he. Then with a half sigh in which the acute observer might have detected something of relief: "Well, I suppose you know best. But he seemed such a nice fellow; that's why I ventured to try and help the thing on for you."

She uttered an impatient exclamation.

"Well, it's a mercy you failed, then! Can't I speak for myself?" And then, in a burst of vehemence: "Oh, if only you could speak for yourself, John, as well as you speak for other people, things might have been different!"

She threw herself into a chair, covering her eyes with her hand—it might have been to protect them from the glare of the fire.

And slowly he turned and observed her, with a new and amazed look in his frank

"If only I could speak for myself?"

echoed he in a low voice.

"I mean," said she, speaking fast and low, as if to hide embarrassment, "you needn't have actually gone and promised the man money so as to help him to marry—me! Where would our nice, comfortable, happy friendship have been when I was married to an egotistical, self-indulgent creature like that? I tremble to think of it. For I couldn't have done without you, John, after all these years. One grows used to people, dependent on them. No, I don't care how badly I've behaved to Bob Carden. He may think what he likes of me so long as I haven't got to marry him and lose you."

There was a pause, and after it he came slowly towards her and, standing behind

her, laid his hand upon her shoulder.

"Do you know you have been saying a great many strange and wonderful things, Maimie?" said he. "I wonder whether you guess all that they mean to me? might mean more than you reckoned for, and place you in another awkward position, However, I shan't take advantage of you."

"But how if I wanted you to take advantage of me?" murmured she.

He said no word, but his hand weighed a

little more heavily on her shoulder.

"Oh, I wonder whether unselfishness is such a glorious thing as it is vaunted!" cried she presently, in her old quick way. "Do you know, I sometimes think it can be carried too far-yes, a great deal too far—and become quite a stupid virtue."

"So you want me to take advantage of

you?" said he, after a minute.

One of her hands went up until it met his

on her shoulder.

"Yes, please, John," said she. "I suppose this is all very unwomanly and dreadful of me, but you know you really have been so dense, and for such a long time. And you've so nearly got me into such a dreadful hobble by your density that there's nothing for it but for me to be unwomanly, in the interest of both of us. Do you understand, John?" she added, after a pause.

She had risen before speaking the last words, and was standing over the fire, her forehead resting against the tall mantel-

"Yes, I understand at last," said he.

"And, after all, you can always put me back in my place again. I shan't resent it-

I shall have deserved it."

"There's only one place that I can put you into, Maimie, if you will have it," said he. "In fact, I have always given it to you. You might have taken it years ago, if you had wanted to."

She turned now, her face sweet and tender in its mischief.

"What a pity you never offered it to me! To think of the time wasted by your not being a little wiser!"

"Thank Heaven you have taught me to be wiser!" smiled he, coming close to her and taking the little head in his strong "Now you shall always teach hands.

me; I shan't be too proud to learn, I assure

"Well, you have been a very bad pupil. You'll have to be much quicker and cleverer in future to make up for the long, weary job I have had in getting you to this point."

He had passed his arm round her, and she rested her head on his shoulder with a

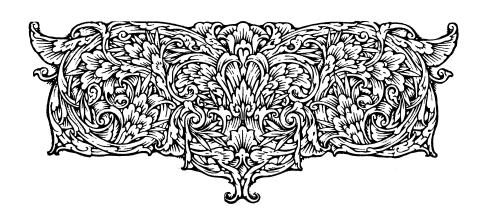
contented sigh.

"But I wish you hadn't offered that money to Bob Carden," said she.
"You incorrigible little piece of vindictiveness!" he cried. "And I am very glad. Even if he takes it, it is a very small price for me to pay for you! And, as I hereby vow to take all your burdens upon my shoulders from this day, it is my duty to make up a little to that poor fellow for the infamous way in which you have treated him."

"If you had seen him run down the stairs as I came across the passage," said she, "you would not waste any pity on him. Oh, isn't he thankful at this minute to have got off free without having to marry a woman who had no money!" She paused an instant. "Now, Miss Morier really has a fortune," she said mischievously, "and I don't believe it'll all be tied up. But he'll make very sure this time before he proposes."

Upon which he shook her, but without any of his former attempt at severity, as the door

opened to admit the dinner guest.



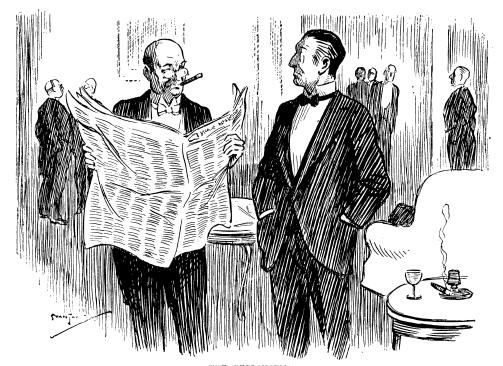
THE MYSTERY.

ND would you ask what thing Love be, That bears so dear a name? Wide, wide as farthest reach of sea, And broad as earth its fame.

It is desired as coined gold, As ducats and moidores; It is a thousand stories told, A myriad metaphors.

It is the chain that cannot part, That binds, yet leaves one free; It is the bond that keeps this heart In thrall to very thee.

ERIC CHILMAN.



THE EXPLANATION.

"DIDN'T you hear about it?"

"No.

"But it happened in your neighbourhood."

"I know-but my wife's been away."

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

VICTOR'S WANTS.

By J. Roland Fay.

"I THINK," said Thomas, speaking with the authority of forty years' bachelorhood, "a baby should have the things he really wants on his birthday—the things he will really enjoy, not the things we think he ought to like. No baby likes clothes." The birthday referred to was Victor's fast approaching first, and Amelia had just privately exhibited sundry articles of infant attire with the remark that they were to be presents to Victor from her. "Mine," continued Thomas, "will be a Teddy Bear."

Now, I heartily agree with Thomas's principle, but not with his practice. Victor has a Teddy Bear, or, rather, Amelia has it. Victor had it for twenty minutes; it was then found with one ear missing, the other hanging by a thread, one arm seriously dislocated, and one eye at the other end of the room (Victor is a hale fellow). Thereupon Amelia openly robbed him of it, reunited it, and now he only sees it on state occasions. No, Thomas, Victor's personal choice would be your eye-glasses.

But not necessarily your expensive specials; a cheap duplicate would do, provided the gilt

shed sufficient glint, and they were offered to him upon your nose, from which he might grab them—after a few playful feints at your nose. That is the kind of thing Victor really wants.

He also wants a black saucepan—one that has been on a fire and is rich in black, and is generous with it. He would like to wear his whitest and daintiest garment for the occasion.

whitest and daintiest garment for the occasion. He wants a large ball of worsted and full reel of cotton. The continuous unwinding of these merely by pulling, and the simultaneous entanglement upon the person, give great satisfaction.

He wants a basin of water.

He wants Marjorie's hair and Marjorie with it. He wants to twist it and tug at it, while Marjorie appropriately squirms and squeals (Victor can tug). I think Marjorie might wear a suitable wig for this, held in place by a strap fastening under her chin; the squirming and squealing then, though somewhat deceifful, would be a comparatively cheerful business for Marjorie.

He wants a sewing-machine. This would be rather expensive, but he wants it badly.

And more balls of worsted.

And a meal of gravel from the garden path. No doubt a digestible substitute for gravel, having much the same appearance, might be found. Could not rusks, for instance, be manufactured in the form of gravel? Then a space on the garden path would be cleared and cemented, thickly covered with gravel-rusks, and Victor sat in the middle. It would then be a race between Victor and sparrows.

And more water.

And a lot more things like these.

What a birthday you would have if you got them, Victor, old chap! But such presents would not be considered proper. I dare not even hint at such things. So you will have to make the best of Uncle Thomas's Teddy Bear,

AS IT HAPPENED.

I never intended to kiss her— I told her so after the fact.

I was just sitting there, On the arm of her chair,

When a wicked suggestion was changed to an act—A deplorable thought to an act.

It was just a bad impulse that seized me And captured my will by surprise, And encompassed my fall so—

Unless it was also (But how could it be so?) the look in her eyes, The rogue peeping out of her eyes.

Leopold Spero.



THE COMMENT.

HE: Martha Gubbins, as died yesterday, 'as been pew-opener for fifty-three years. SHE: So that's what comes o' pew openin'!

while he lasts. I should advise you to get as much as you can out of him during the first twenty minutes.

THE S

Two contractors, of a type unfortunately too familiar, were talking of some buildings which had collapsed before they were finished.

"Well, Billerton," said one, "you always have better luck than I do."

"Better luck? How's that?"

"Why, my row of new houses blew down in last week's wind, you know, while yours weren't harmed. All were built the same—same woodwork, same mortar, same everything."

"Yes," said the other, "but you forget that

mine had been papered."

"You seem to be very fond of jazz music,' said a man to another in the lounge of a fashionable hotel now given over to dancing.

"Yes, I like it best of all," was the reply. "You don't have to put on formal attire when you listen to it, nobody asks you who wrote it, and you don't have to pretend you understand it."



"I DON'T think," said the bride, "that I'll make a cake by the recipe that Mrs. Jenkins gave me. It will be too expensive. The eggs alone will cost too much."

"Why," asked her husband, "how many

does it want?"

"Eighteen—the yolks of nine and the whites of nine."



A SERIOUS MATTER.

SHOPWALKER: What is your pleasure, sir? Customer (from the North): Mind your ain business; it's twa shirts I'm specin' aboot the noo.



EMPLOYER: You want a large salary for one who has had so little experience. Yourn: Well, sir, ain't it harder for me when I don't know how?

TOUCHING!

(Signor Marinetti has aroused considerable interest in a new art which he terms "Tactilism," the art of developing and enjoying the sense of touch.)

The art of painting pictures isn't mastered all at once,

And the art of writing's difficult if you are but a dunce,

While the art of making music—well, it simply isn't in it

With the art of tactilism, which is learnt in half a minute.

When Edwin's looking lover-like and Angelina coy, And he's clinging to her fingers like a bather to a buoy,

Pray don't conclude their attitude implies a tender passion—

They're merely ardent tactilisers, following the fash'on.

"ETHEL," exclaimed the stern parent at breakfast, "that young man of yours stays far too late. He didn't leave the house till twelve o'clock last night."

"Eleven by the sun," said Ethel sweetly. "You are forgetting about 'summer time,'

old bean."

ASS.

"My friend," said the railway carriage bore, "things are in a very serious state; the prospect is threatening, the horizon is black, the outlook is dark. I ask you, can you discern one bright spot in the present situation?"

"Yes, I can," replied the victim. "I am

getting out at the next station."



NO FEAR!

"CAN Bill 'Iggins play on our side?"
"Yus, I don't fink! And 'ave Lavend

"Yus, I don't fink! And 'ave Lavender Street Orient dahn on us, sayin' we pinched 'im!"

A highly expert tactiliser is Adolphus Bupp,

Who'll "touch" his friends for any sum, from two-and-sixpence up:

But I think he meets his match when he approaches Mr. Jones,

Who's as "touchy" as they make 'em when he's asked for little loans.

The art of tactilism's not confined to any class (Jane tactilises finger-marks on all our plate and glass),

And this trying life provides us all-now, isn't it the fact?-

With endless opportunities for exercising tact!

B. Noel Saxelbu.

"My dear," remonstrated her husband, "don't you cook much more for dinner than we can use?"

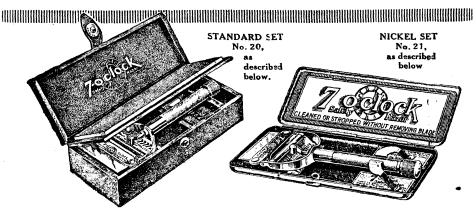
"Of course," retorted his wife. "If I didn't, how could I economise on the left-overs?"



WAITER: Customers are making a lot of complaints about the pheasants being too high, sir.

RESTAURANT PROPRIETOR: Oh, well, tell the

band to play louder.



A Shilling buys Another

of either of these 12/6 sets.

Between the 1st July and the 31st December, 1921, every purchaser of a "7 o'clock" Razor Set (as illustrated), at the ordinary price of 12/6, is entitled to obtain another set exactly the same for 1/- only. Twenty-five Shillings' worth of Razors for 13/6.

If you buy a "7 o'clock" Razor Set to-day, you will naturally want your friend—the man with whom you have "talked shaving"—to share the comfort which this perfect shaving instrument provides. This special offer enables you to present him with a "7 o'clock" razor exactly similar to your own, complete in either black or nickel case, for the trifling sum of 1/-, plus 9d. postage and registration. This second Razor Set will be in no way inferior to your own, but of absolutely the same quality—heavily silvered, accurately adjusted, and well cased.

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Purchase a "7 o'clock" Safety Razor at any razor shop (either a Standard or

No. 20 Set.—Heavily silver-plated stropping razor, with six finest lencet steel blades and leather strop (hinged as part of case), the whole in handsome velvet-lined case as illustrated.

Price

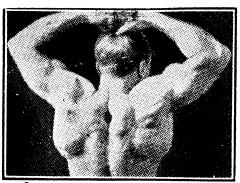
Nickel Set). Fill up the voucher you will find inside the box, or ask the dealer to give you one. Send it to the Manufacturers (address below), together with the dealer's receipt and P.O. for 1/9, and a second Set will be at once posted to any address you give—either your own or that of a friend. Either Set may be purchased and either will be sent for the additional shilling. For example, you may choose to buy a Standard Set for everyday use, and have a Nickel Set sent for your week-end suit-case. In this way 13/6 will buy you two first-class razors, the regular price of which is 12/6 each.

Any dealer will stock the "7 o'clock," and will vouch for the reputation of the manufacturers who make this offer.

No. 21 Set contains heavily silver-plated razor and six finest lancet steel blades in a flat nickelled case, gilded 12/6



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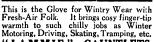
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Send the coupon for a 10-Day Tube. Note how clean the teeth feel after using. Mark the absence of the viscous film. See how teeth whiten as the film-coats disappear. Watch the other good effects.

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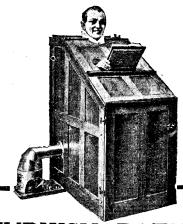


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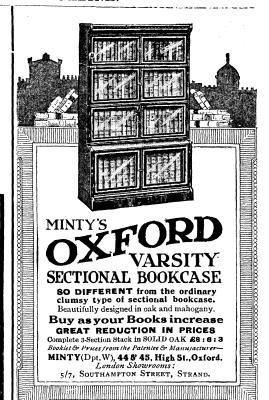
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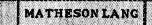






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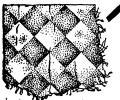
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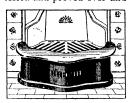
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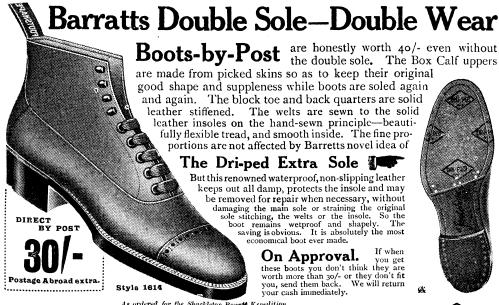
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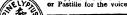
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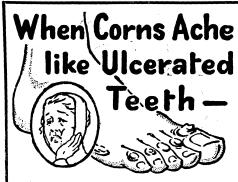
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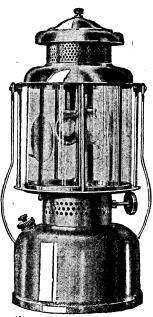
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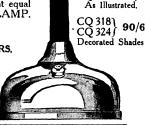
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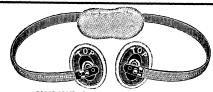
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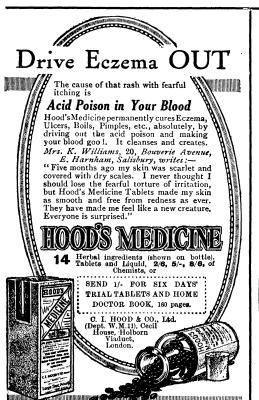
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This is one of a series we are about to publish of striking testimonials to the reproductive qualities of Ciro Pearls.

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MY HUSBAND SHOPS. By B. A. Clarke.

IT is a popular fallacy that shopping, as distinguished from buying, is a weakness peculiarly feminine. Arthur endorses it, and is for ever twitting me, not suspecting that he himself has the disease in a malignant form. If you doubt this, accompany us any Saturday afternoon marketing. Our first eall is the Cosmopolitan Stores.

"We want some breakfast bacon," says my husband, leaning upon his stick. "You know what I mean-rashers and all that sort of thing. I suppose you have nothing better in stock than Irish?"

The suggestion is that, although to the attendant Irish is the summum bonum, Arthur knows of kinds vastly better and dearer that he would gladly buy.

"I have never heard of anything better than

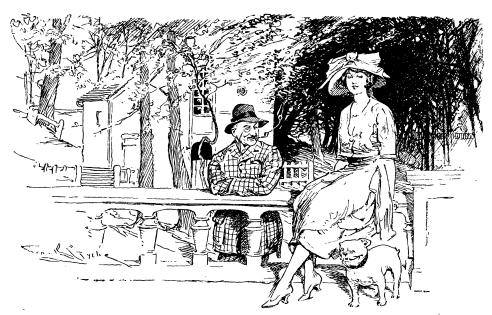
six-shilling, eight-shilling, twenty-shilling bacon that Arthur is seeking.

"Well, Poppy, shall we take it?" examination discovers that it is too lean, too fat, too dark or light in colour—anything but too expensive for us.

The attendant argues that for Irish bacon to be even a shade darker, leaner, lighter or fatter would be a damning defect. I remark resignedly that, this being so, we must look to some other kind, and recall a piece of Wiltshire I bought there a fortnight ago, which had exactly the degree of light or shade, lean or fattiness for which we yearned. Incidentally I mention the price—one-and-nine a pound.

"I don't think your husband likes breakfast bacon at one-and-nine," says the salesman confidently, trying to catch Arthur's gaze, now fixed resolutely upon a shelf of Californian

peach tins.



LOCAL CUSTOMS.

SHE: Mr. Swaddling seems to have travelled a good deal. He told me he saw a man-eating tiger in India.

HE: You may not believe me, Miss Ethel, but here in this tiny village I've seen a man eating rabbit.

the best Irish, sir-Doulton's pea-fed." The salesman has taken up, and is affectionately caressing, a piece that would cost more than my housekeeping allowance for a week. examines it through a dubious monocle.

"Poppy, this is the best they keep here—can

we make do with it?"

The attendant, who thinks Arthur one of the finest characters outside fiction, has his own unworthy theory of my hesitation.

"Four shillings a pound, madam, which is quite cheap, considering the quality. couldn't find a better piece of bacon anywhere."

"Perhaps not in the suburbs," says Arthur, and probably not anywhere at the price."

The salesman washes his hands deprecatingly. It cuts him to the heart that he hasn't the And now the local manager takes a hand.

"What is the difficulty, madam?"

"The lady, sir, wants a breakfast bacon at one-and-nine."

This is putting it crudely. What I am seeking is a particular combination of qualities that hitherto has been found only in bacons at a low price. It is not so much on my account that I resent the salesman's brutality, as on Arthur's. I notice him now rubbing the back of his head distressfully. He shivers at a remark like this, as does the sensitive plant when people address it untactfully.

The manager has an idea.

"There is no breakfast bacon at one-and-nine, madam, believe me, but we happen to have a remnant of Devonshire, somewhat damaged in



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(2)

appearance, but absolutely perfect otherwise. Taking the whole piece, you may have it at two shillings."

He puts it into my hands. As I examine it, my heart thumps excitedly. This is one of the bargains I live for. The damage is in appearance only, and I know how this has been caused. The manager is a vehement anti-waste politician, and, started upon this topic, will pound the counter oratorically with whatever comes to hand. My bargain of bargains of two

weeks ago was achieved by playing up to this weakness. As I entered the Cosmopolitan, the manager was handling a superb piece of Wiltshire. I inquired innocently how he regarded the appointment of Sir Eric Geddes as chairman of the committee of business men to stop waste. When his exposition was complete, I bought the piece of Wiltshire from his hand at one-and-nine. Delicious - there is no other word for it. This piece of Devonshire had been treated less severely, the damage expressing (probably) only his concern at our commitments in Palestine. But, remembering the Wiltshire, I would not . budge from one-andeleven. He tried for the odd halfpenny, but I was adamant. My ' firmness on such a sordid trifle drove Arthur from the shop in shame. The salesman, who had noticed how my penuriousness hurt him, followed my husband to the pavement, where he attempted, I am sure, to sell Arthur some frightfully expensive

thirteen and a half ounces of Devonshire breakfast bacon (politics-damaged) at one-and-eleven, and was asking the manager about his little grand-daughter. I kept off politics. That cat Laura (Mrs. John Sprague) had entered the shop, and I wasn't going to make bacon bargains for her. I heard the manager out on the subject of his little favourite because I did not wish to curtail Arthur's "shopping" outside. Dear boy, he is so very splendid and regal in his near-purchasing, and does

enjoy it so! When I emerged, he was saying to the still admiring salesman:

"You don't seem to have exactly what I am looking for, but let me know when you have something really choice."



It was time for the small daughter of the house to be in bed, but no amount of coaxing could get her there. At last her father offered to lie on the bed till the "sandman" arrived.



A PAINLESS AFFAIR.

In the meantime I paid for five pounds thirteen and a half

Off she went "pickaback," and the tired mother leaned back in her chair with a sigh of content, ready for a hard-earned rest.

Ten minutes, twenty, half an hour, and she was wondering when her husband would be down, when all at once she heard a soft, stealthy pit-a-pat. Nearer came the steps, and then a little white-robed form, with a tiny finger on her lip, stood in the doorway.

"Hush, hush, muvver!" she said. "I'se

got daddy to sleep."

The STOUT WOMAN knows that she cannot grace a smart gown

"Whatever you do, Madame, don't get stout. It is impossible for a woman to look smart when fat." Such was the advice given by a leading corsetière to one of her smartest clients, and there is not a dressmaker or tailor in the world who would not echo her sentiments. Now, though she might not be willing to acknowledge it, the stout woman is quite aware of this cruel fact. She knows that she has relinquished all claims to grace and beauty, and realising—as every women must—that beauty is the greatest asset to a woman, she is willing to endure all to conquer her tendency to Obesity.

A Word in Your Ear, Mesdames. Do you wish to reduce your weight, to grow slim and graceful, youthful and attractive once more? Then take a few Clynol Berries. You need not change your diet, neither need you spend hours in wearisome exercise. All that is necessary is to take one of these little brown berries three times a day, after meals. No one need know you are taking them. They can be carried in the handbag and eaten without anyone being the wiser.





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THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE.

A HOBBY.

Life may be narrow or life may be wide; It mainly depends on what hobby you ride. Trade or travel, sport or speed—
Any of these makes a sturdy steed.
But they cannot be ridden by everyone—
Taking money and time, and the rest of it—
And the hobby of hobbles to ride, bar none, is the hobby of—making the best of it!

High-born or humble, needy or rich,
This is the mount to leap over the ditch;
Though the mud be foul and the ooze be rank,
It will carry you safely from bank to bank.
Should a flood of trouble o'erwhelm your track,
The harbour you'll make, on the crest of it,
If with courage and grit you sit tight on the back
Of your hobby of—making the best of it!

Jessie Pope.

"Why," replied the tailor, after a momentary hesitation, "after a certain time I conclude he is not a gentleman, and then I ask him."



A PROFESSOR noted among his students for his caustic wit had in one of his classes one year a young man who was both ignorant and conceited. One morning he made a specially self-satisfied display of both these characteristics, and the professor said he would like to see him at the end of the hour.

When he came up after the lecture, the professor asked: "You are Mr. Junkins?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you a visiting card?"



HE (after a difference of opinion): Well, I suppose you've made up your mind to stay in? SHE: No, I've made up my face to go out!

In the cook's absence the young mistress of the house undertook, with the help of an inexperienced kitchen-maid, to get the Sunday luncheon. The flurried maid, who had been struggling in the kitchen with a coffee machine which refused to work, confessed that she had forgotten to wash the lettuce.

"Well, never mind, Marie," said the considerate mistress. "Go on with the coffee, and I'll do it. Where do you keep the soap?"

TES

"Mr. Smith," a man asked his tailor, "how is it you have not called on me for your account?"

"Oh, I never ask a gentleman for money."

"Indeed! How, then, do you get on if he doesn't pay?"

"I—I—yes, sir," stammered the puzzled student.

"Then, Mr. Junkins," the professor said drily, "write down on your visiting card all that you know, and bring it to me to-morrow."



A SIGHTSEER noticed an aged rustic sitting before his cottage, and inquired: "Have you always lived here?"

"Šir?"
"Have you always lived here?"

The peasant was still looking blank when Aunt Sarah appeared in the cottage door and explained to her spouse: "Wha'for you don't understand, Silas? He means: did you live here before you was born. or was you born after you moved here?"



Fills the longest clothes line in the shortest time!

THE snow-white linen gently swaying to the quick-drying breeze—linen as sweet and fragrant as the honeysuckle in the hedgerow—is pleasing to the busy housewife. She calls it the long line of happiness.

So much accomplished in so little time, and with a minimum of fatigue, fills her with enthusiasm for the splendid qualities of the daylight-saver, Sunlight Soap, by whose aid she is able to enjoy many pleasant hours of sunny relaxation.

Efficient and economical by reason of the purity of every particle, each bar of Sunlight Soap is guaranteed pure—that is why it goes so much further.

A LITTLE "SUNLIGHT" MEANS A LOT OF SAVING.

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The name LEVER on Soap is a Guarantee of Purity and Excellence.



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THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE.

THE PROPER SETTING.

A daily paper reminds women that in "a dainty drawing-room they are surrounding themselves with inanimate rivals to their own charms."

'Tis not in the drawing-room, Mabel, I find you attractive and fair; In fact, I am almost unable To take any note of you there; ' For my glance wanders off (till I've got not A thought for your beauty at all) To the portrait of Doug on the what-not And "Baby's First Prayer" on the wall.

Your cushions bedizened with laces. Your knick-knacks of many a kind React upon me till your face is Entirely expunged from my mind. Beyond all my power of prevention, My fancy is certain to stray; The china demands my attention, The "art pot" allures me away.

"Bai Jove!" drawled the rather self-important neighbour, Mr. Jenkins.

"I've got some medicine for him, but it doesn't seem to be helping much."

"Bai Jove!" drawled the visitor again.
"Mummie," broke in little Dolly, "why
not take Mr. Jenkins's advice and buy some Jove?"

"Оп, Dad, Mrs. Smith says you're the handsomest man in this street," said the frivolous daughter.

"What? What's that you say?"

"Mrs. Smith says you're the handsomest man in this street," she repeated.

"Hum m! She did, did she?"

After a moment's silence, the damsel was heard to say under her breath: "I believe it's



REASSURING.

NERVOUS PASSENGER: What would you do if the boat capsized? FERRYMAN: Oh, don't you worry about me, ma'am-I've nothing on that'll spoil!

But nothing can lessen your splendour, Dear heart, in the dining-room; when My seventeenth helping you tender, I find you adorable then; And the love that my heart is so rich in O'ercomes me at once when I see You showing your charms in the kitchen, Concocting an omelette (for me).

T. Hodgkinson.



"Yes, poor little Tommy seems very queer," remarked Mrs. Jones to her visitor. "I really don't know what to do for the best."

"What's that? What's true?" asked the

father expectantly.

"That a man always says 'What?' when you pay him a compliment, so he can hear it all over again!'



"DID you really call this gentlemen an old fool?" asked counsel.

The prisoner tried hard to collect his

thoughts.

"Well, the more I look at him, the more likely it seems that I did," he replied.



EVERY WOMAN HER OWN BEAUTY SPECIALIST.

A COMMON DISFIGUREMENT.

BOUT 75 per cent. of the women one A meets suffer from disfiguring blackheads. These are caused by enlarged pores, which become clogged with dirt and waste matter. To get rid of blackheads, the safest and quickest method is to damp them thoroughly with warm water in which a tablet of stymol has been dissolved. When the face is dried. the blackheads will come right off on the towel without any pain or forcing. In order to prevent them forming again, the face needs an occasional astringent bath to keep the pores from getting over-large. Always keep a few stymol tablets handy, for an occasional sparkling face-bath of stymol water is the best prevention for this ugly affliction.

EVEN WORSE

is the sight—alas! too common—of a woman with an unsightly growth of down on her Yet many of these spend a good deal of time trying to eliminate the offending hairs. Electrolysis and shaving have both proved unsatisfactory, as well as painful. There is, however, one remedy which has a great deal to recommend it. If pure powdered pheminol is applied directly to the superfluous hair, the latter can be removed after a few minutes without the slightest difficulty.

BEAUTIFUL IN THE RIGHT PLACE.

F superfluous hair is unsightly, the lack of hair in the right place is a serious defect. The most beautiful eyes lose half their charm if the lashes are thin and pale, while beautful lashes and brows give a peculiar charm to even the plainest face. In feeding the eyelashes it is essential to choose a preparation that is absolutely harmless. The best thing known for this purpose is pure mennaline, which is easy to obtain from your chemist. About every other night a trifle should be rubbed into the roots of the eyelashes and evebrows. If this treatment is continued, the lashes will not only grow thick and long, but they will tend to become darker in colour.

N these days when woman realises the every intelligent importance of an attractive personal appearance, there is a great demand for some simple aids to beauty which are within the means of all. The professional beauty specialists, with their fabulous prices and long treatments, are obviously impracticable for all but the wealthiest. Moreover, it is a fact that equally good results can be obtained by the wise use of a few simple and easily-obtained materials. It is proposed, therefore, in this article, to point out the average deficiencies which mar a woman's beauty, and to suggest some practical remedies.

IS SOAP INJURIOUS?

HE skin demands first attention. The foundation of a good complexion is perfect cleanliness. This, however, is too often only obtained by ruining the skin with alkaline soaps and hard water. Soap is really injurious to most skins, and if soap is used on the face, it should be a pure non-alkaline kind such as Pilenta. The ideal method of freeing the complexion from waste matter, dead cuticle, and dirt, is to smear it with pure mercolized wax before going to bed, sponging the face in the morning with warm water.



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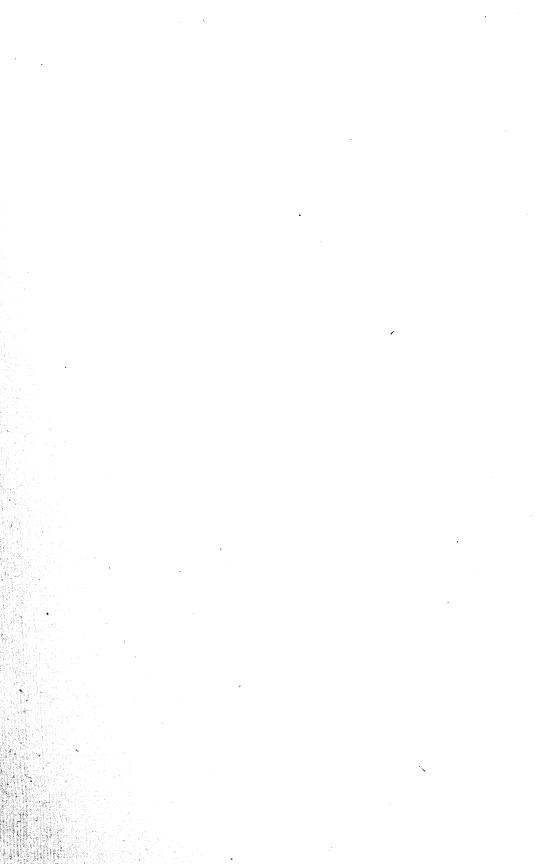
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